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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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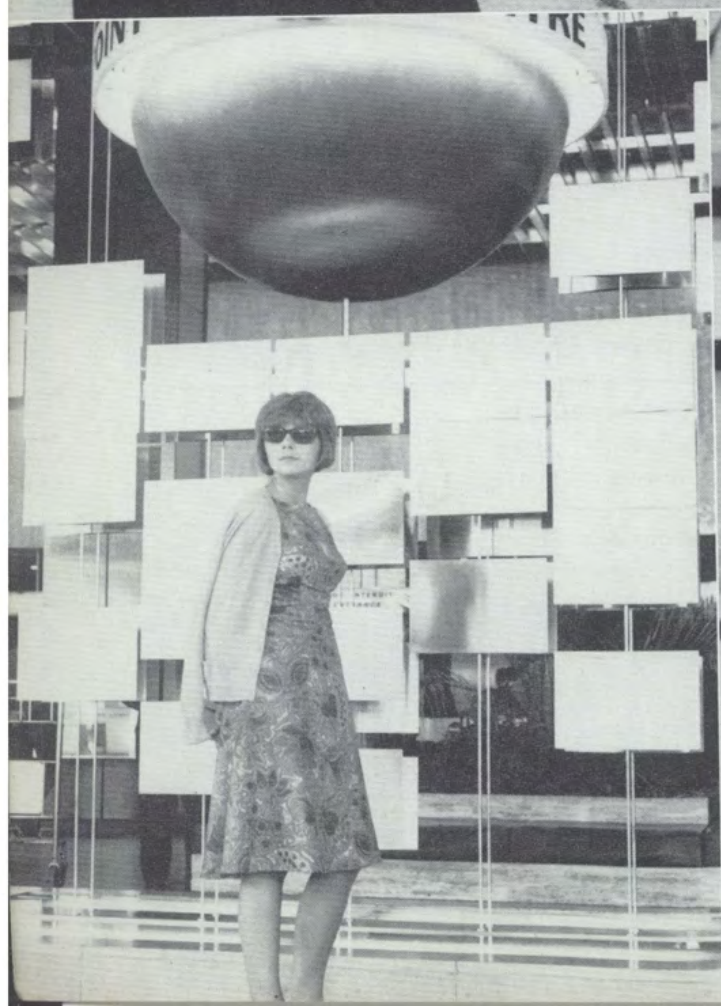
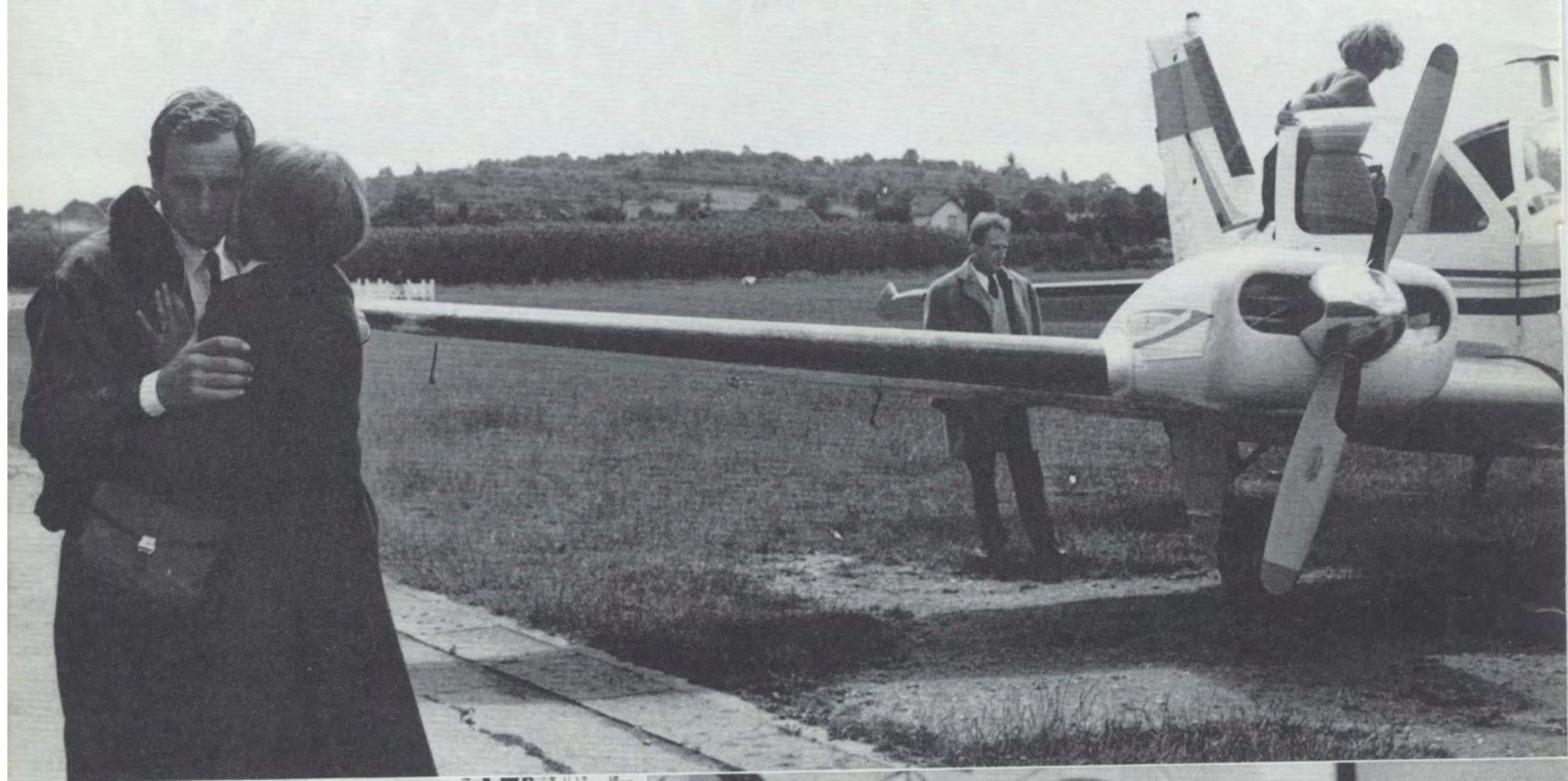
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JEAN-LUC GODARD



OU LA RAISON ARDENTE

TOM MILNE

GODARD HAS ALWAYS BEEN two or three years ahead of his time. All the same, one wasn't quite prepared for the way everything else (from *The Red Desert* downwards) began to look rather old-fashioned and strained as soon as *Une Femme Mariée* appeared on the scene. Comparisons are impossible, of course: *The Red Desert* is in its own way just as remarkable a film. It is simply that Godard has realised—and found a technique for dealing with his realisation—that modern life is so complex, and human relationships so intangibly tangled, that fully rounded and polished artistic statements with all the ends tucked neatly out of sight are no longer possible. The *ne plus ultra* of shifting moral values which we have come to through nuclear anxiety, failure to communicate and all the rest of it, ends up in the old problem which Godard didn't quite solve in *Une Femme est une Femme*: "... juxtaposing things which didn't necessarily go together, a film which was gay and sad at the same time." That film, even more than *Bande à Part*, is *Une Femme Mariée*.

There is a story (true) which has always horrified me. A DT's patient is stamping frantically in a corner, trying to kill a horde of imaginary rats, and when the male nurse tells him that there are no rats there, he says, "I know ... but I can see them." How does one express that knowing and that seeing, complementary and contradictory, on the screen?

A film like *Fail Safe* deals with the most nerve-edged subject in the world—nuclear destruction by accident. But as a letter in *The Observer* recently pointed out sanely and cogently, such accidents could under no circumstances happen. So, logically, one knows they couldn't happen, but one still *sees* (fears) that they could: and Lumet's film tells only half the story. Following a parallel line of reasoning, Antonioni tells only half the story in *The Red Desert*. Giuliana, convincingly enough, is wracked by modern life, by the machines which are taking over from man, the poisonous gas exuding from the factories, and the increasing instability and incommunicability between humans. But as seen by Antonioni and portrayed by Monica Vitti as stammering incomprehensibly, cowering against walls, crouching inexplicably in a field to devour a workman's half-eaten sandwich, Giuliana is fit only for the madhouse.

Admittedly it may be argued that she has cracked under the strain, but Antonioni is not documenting a case history. He is trying to document a state of mind, and modern Ravenna, I am sure, is not populated by berserk beings like Giuliana: they almost certainly go about their business normally, even though they may, deep down inside, be just as unalterably affected by the alienation of living in the technological society which Antonioni delineates so subtly in his vision of Ravenna's landscape of terrible splendours. Giuliana doesn't live with us in our world, she is off in a world of her own. One senses that Antonioni is straining so hard to communicate Giuliana's alienation that a strand has snapped between her and normal life: he has tucked away most of her loose ends too neatly. She behaves almost as though she

had become a mindless automaton, and as such, she loses a dimension. Charlotte (in *Une Femme Mariée*) is in her own way just as much of an automaton, without ever losing that dimension. She lives, loves, walks, talks, enjoys, and she communicates; and when she comes to the end of her brief cord and communication stops, she turns to the camera to say "I don't know." In the same way, Godard himself can turn to the camera, or metaphorically turn the camera to us, and say "I don't know." There are so many contradictions and inexplicable factors in modern living which the artist can't tuck away in the corner of his canvas, disguised with a few bold strokes of the brush: at some point, almost inevitably, he must in all honesty resort to the "I don't know."

"Fragments of a film made in 1964"
sub-title of "*Une Femme Mariée*"

THIS RED DESERT-FEMME MARIEE comparison is not entirely fortuitous or malicious. Gérard Guégan has suggested interestingly (*Cahiers du Cinéma* 163) that the little boy's curious monologue in *Une Femme Mariée*, captioned "L'Enfance", might be a description of the making of a rocket; in which case there is a direct parallel with the strange science fiction aura which surrounds Giuliana's little son in *The Red Desert*. I don't see the monologue this way myself, but the similarities abound anyway with Giuliana's attempts to "reintegrate herself with reality." For *Une Femme Mariée* one might turn the phrase, and say that Charlotte's problem is "disintegration from reality." Godard's sub-title quoted above refers to the collage effect of the film, which moves freely between fragments—scenes, bits of scenes, bits of bits of scenes, a printed page, a word, half a word. But at the same time (one must never expect single strands from Godard), it is a film about fragmentation. The film opens with a disembodied hand sliding slowly forward across a white sheet; and it ends with the same hand (Charlotte's) slowly withdrawing, leaving blankness, nothing.

The scenes of love-making which open and close the film are composed entirely of human fragments—a hand, a leg, a head, a trunk. The effect is extraordinary, as though the world had split into separate pieces, separating people from one another. This feeling of dislocation is carried through the whole film: three people having an after-dinner chat in a comfortable living-room are suddenly transported separately, a head in close-up against a neutral background, to have their thoughts bared; conversations and actions are punctuated by cut-in signs and placards; printed words are broken down to form new, minatory meanings; a photographic session projected in negative strips away the flesh from girls frisking in a swimming pool; even a simple taxi-ride necessitates three taxis instead of one.

The anguish which runs through the film, implicitly in Charlotte's behaviour, explicitly in Godard's direction, comes from this separateness: Charlotte senses her solitude, senses the ultimate impossibility of human relations. Unlike Giuliana, it doesn't make her behave insanely,

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un article d'une franchise totale

Jusqu'
OÙ

une femme
peut-elle
aller

EN AMOUR



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it just governs her life like an invisible hand pushing her relentlessly along. When she and Robert (her lover) part at the end, full of hopes and promises to return to each other and get married, Charlotte knows that it is all over, not so much because there is any reason for the affair to end, as because there seems to be no reason for it not to. It would be wrong to suggest that this feeling of almost cosmic disintegration dominates the film in any explicit sense. *Il faut vivre sa vie*—and in addition to their more anatomical aspect, the love scenes have a deep tenderness, underlined by their accompanying leitmotif from a Beethoven Quartet. Almost clinically un-erotic, these scenes are at the same time infused with passion, as though love were being subjected to an amazed and wondering eye through a microscope. Charlotte is living her life happily and unthinkingly in the present tense, with the menace no more than a background which one has got so used to that one no longer notices it: a radio blaring its grotesquely inflated list of road casualties to an empty room, a voice mentioning Auschwitz and evoking only puzzlement (“Auschwitz?... oh yes... thalidomide...”). There are more pressing things to attend to, urging themselves on Charlotte’s attention from all sides.

“If one takes away the outside, there is the inside... and when one takes away the inside, there is the soul” “Vivre sa vie”

UNE FEMME MARIÉE OPERATES ON various levels, and works on all of them. At bottom, it is the eternal triangle, almost classically exposed. Charlotte has a lover, Robert; she has a husband, Pierre, with whom she still enjoys physical passion; she is pregnant, but doesn’t know which of them is the father, and is afraid. But unlike Truffaut’s *La Peau Douce*, which was a case history, Godard’s hymn to *la peau douce* is a sociological document. Charlotte is not a woman, but Woman. What Godard is after in his portrait is that mysterious, anonymous being assailed on all sides by the shrill voices of advertisements, advising her to dress, paint and otherwise distort herself towards some nebulous ideal of sameness and sinfulness. “Triumph,” says the girl in a brassière poster, proudly snapping her shoulder-straps. “Crescendo... My Sin... Scandal...” urges a perfume ad. “Just how far can a woman go in love?” asks a newspaper poster, helpfully offering instruction “of total frankness.” Charlotte follows all the rules towards the goal of tasting both married love and illicit love, and finds that they are exactly the same.

It has been suggested that Godard made a mistake in using Macha Méril instead of Anna Karina to portray Charlotte, on the grounds that with Karina there would have been more “soul”. This seems to me to be beside the point. *Vivre sa Vie* was a portrait of a woman which stripped off layer after layer until the soul was bared; it was a film of the inside, by way of moral philosophy. *Une Femme Mariée* is a film of the outside, totally unconcerned with ethics or morals, and consequently calls for a totally different heroine. Karina is almost magically personal: those wide, startled eyes, that grave, total absorption, the sudden liberating irruption into dance, would have destroyed the smooth surface texture of *Une Femme Mariée*. No woman’s magazine would be able to reduce the Nana of *Vivre sa Vie* to a set of statistics, or categorise her spontaneously joyous dance round the billiard-table so as to be able to produce a marketable recipe. Instead, we have Macha Méril/Charlotte putting on a record, which bears its label “Erotica” in large and clear letters, and listening to a woman laughing endlessly, idiotically and presumably erotically, with the same sort of robot attention with which she follows instructions to see whether or not she measures up to “an ideal bust”. In other words,

she conforms, as Macha Méril’s deliciously cool and witty performance makes amply clear.

This is not to suggest that Godard suggests that Charlotte is soulless; it is simply that in her life, and the routine which surrounds her, the outlets are blocked. Godard, in fact, makes it quite clear that, ultimately, Nana, Odile (in *Bande à Part*) and Charlotte are of the same species, though their particular contexts in life draw the soul from Nana, the emotion from Odile, and the body from Charlotte. But they converge at a point: “on est coupable”. Suddenly, out of nothing, Charlotte reveals her concern: “All the people in the streets... I want to know... I want to know them all. Him... him... him... that one is perhaps going to die tomorrow. He waits for a phone call before committing suicide... And then no one calls. So he kills himself.” Then, on a beautiful close-up of her sadly bowed head, comes the all-embracing “on est coupable”—we are guilty. The link is direct with the close-up revealing Nana’s startled comprehension of guilt during the police interrogation of her supposed theft, and of Odile in the Métro suddenly discovering her kinship with those who dwell in misery.

“Even a quiet countryside... even a road where cars, people, couples, pass... may lead to a concentration camp” “Nuit et Brouillard”

CHARLOTTE’S SUDDEN CRY OF KINSHIP with the person waiting in despair for the sound of another voice has obvious reference to her own situation. In the following sequence, her lover telephones to say that he is leaving for Marseilles to act in *Bérénice*; she immediately calls her doctor for the result of her pregnancy tests, puts down the phone, buries her head in the bedclothes like a child afraid of the dark, and mutters the end of a phrase, “. . . Not to Be . . .” This fear in the dark is echoed, vaguely at first, in the commentary (Charlotte’s interior monologue) which intermittently accompanies the action, and from which one can pick phrases like “Jealousy... When does he return?... It’s dangerous.” Later it grows more specific: “When one is dead... With lassitude.” But for the most part Charlotte lives in the daylight, burying these thoughts inside her and clinging desperately to the blithe unconcern of the present: “That’s... why I like the present. Because... I don’t know what’s happening to me... It prevents me from going mad.” Even so, the danger signals are omnipresent. As she goes to meet her lover at Orly airport, Godard cuts in close-ups of the street signs and warnings which surround her—DANGER—ARRET D’URGENCE—a poster of Hitchcock glaring threateningly. But her mind is elsewhere, and she doesn’t see these warnings: warnings not so much of a jealous husband as of the end of love, of an empty world waiting like a cage to imprison her. Sitting in the airport cinema, Charlotte and her lover look at each other; the slow, even commentary of Resnais’ *Nuit et Brouillard* quietly begins, “Même un paysage tranquille...”; and they walk out unheeding, heading for the hotel bedroom and the parting of their ways.

“I’m very comfortable like this. And anyway, it’s the ideal position for the spectator in the cinema” Charlotte in “Une Femme Mariée”

TO DESCRIBE THE FILM in terms of concentration camps and dislocated, fragmented worlds, may make it sound portentous, which is the last thing of which *Une Femme Mariée* can be accused. In the first place, it is too sure-footedly relaxed to allow portentousness. In the second, it is consistently and caustically funny. There is, for instance, Godard’s teasing

insolence: Charlotte fires point-blank questions about contraception and whether sexual pleasure constitutes proof of paternity at a doctor who stammers helplessly in his embarrassed efforts to circumnavigate dangerous reefs. There is his love of the outrageous: the maid regaling her mistress with a scabrous, joyous and graphic description of her love life (drawn from Céline's novel *Mort à Crédit*). Or the flippant: a conversation about life, love and boys (WHAT EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW) between two schoolgirls, one nonchalant (SHE KNOWS), one wide-eyed (SHE DOESN'T).

Charlotte's crack about spectators in the cinema, delivered while hunched down comfortably in the front seat of Robert's car, almost disappearing from sight, is the metaphorical equivalent of Godard's easy, informal approach to filmmaking. A film is enjoyable to make, and made to be enjoyed. The surface texture of the film, already broken up by interviews, digressions, cut-ins of street signs, book titles and so forth, is also studded with puns and gags, both visual and verbal:—

- a portrait of Molière is accompanied by a quotation from Bossuet's commentary on the theatre ("I think it has been sufficiently demonstrated that the representation of the natural passions leads to sin"), which wryly evokes the queues of raincoated men who will walk out of the cinema, sadly deceived by the erotic promise of *Une Femme Mariée*; but Molière himself is then cited in defence of the theatre's power "to anticipate sin by purifying love."
- Charlotte's panic about her pregnancy while visiting the doctor ("J'ai peur"), is abruptly followed by a shot of her slipping and falling headlong while running across the street; a cut-in of part of a word, "EVE" (The Fall); then the complete word, "REVES" (her fantasy of fear).
- when Robert and Charlotte drive along the quais after making love, the camera follows behind their open car; but after grey and misty cut-in shots of Maillol's Tuileries statues of naked women, the camera proceeds in front of the car, with the couple now seen through the windscreen as mistily as the statues. The uncomplicated happiness of their love-making is already receding as Charlotte slips away from Robert back to her husband. "Paris pleure après qu'il a plu/Mais plaira-t-il encore autant qu'il a plu?" asks the commentary untranslatably. (Paris weeps after the rain/But will it please as it did before? or: Paris weeps after it has pleased, etc.)

None of these apparent digressions really digress, nor are the puns as simple or extraneous as they may seem. As in Joyce's linguistic dislocations, they throw out hooks in all directions, forming a mesh of meaning; and it is this which prevents the film from falling apart, giving it its superbly firm, ordered texture.

With Godard an image can be, at one and the same time, a private joke, a public gag, a clue, an imaginative link, or a serious statement. When he uses the Hitchcock poster, for instance, it is a) a *hommage* to one of his favourite directors; b) a wry comment on the fact that Hitchcock is one of the few directors grand enough in France to warrant having his face on cinema posters; c) a legitimate means of underlining the minatory aspect of the film; and d) it serves as quotation marks to the thriller parody which runs through the film. Whenever Charlotte leaves her lover or goes to meet him, she plays an absurd game of hide-and-seek, glancing round huntedly, crouching in doorways, and dodging from taxi to taxi as though hounded by a mysterious pursuer. The game reaches an extremely funny climax at the entrance to the Orly airport hotel, with Charlotte and Robert slinking about in dark glasses and resorting to elaborate subterfuges about dropped keys which loudly signal their guilt. Their behaviour is ridiculous, pushed to the edge of parody; yet at the same time there is a recoil action hinging on the Hitchcock-thriller quotation. Charlotte's husband has in actual fact set a private detective on her tail once before: so maybe her clumsy evasions are not merely absurd, but true. How *does* one behave, assuming one doesn't belong to the world of Philip Marlowe and Lemmy Caution, if one suddenly discovers one is being tailed by a private eye? One is reminded of the cheap-thriller scene in *Le Petit Soldat*—ridiculed as

being impossible—in which an assassin walks the street with his gun in full view. Godard commented simply that it *was* possible because it happened that way when the scene was shot on location: none of the bystanders showed alarm, jumped on Michel Subor, or even noticed. Fascination with the *vérité* of *cinéma* and the *cinéma* of *vérité* is one of the constants of Godard's work, and determines the rigorous yet tangential attitude of his camera, at one moment probing for the truth behind the façade, at the next leaping away to show that it is all façade anyway.

CHARLOTTE: *Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire exactement, "regarder"?*

PIERRE: *"Re-garder"* . . . J'sais pas . . .*

Ça veut dire garder deux fois . . .

CHARLOTTE: *Si c'est deux fois . . . alors, c'est précieux.*

GODARD HAS ALREADY DEFINED what he means by the infinite value of the probing "re-gard", in a review of Franju's *Tête contre les murs*: "to direct, to make a film, write a script, is to let the camera look long enough on faces and objects to mark them deeply . . ." *Une Femme Mariée* is focused steadily on three faces: the husband, grave and puzzled, haunted by memories of what Charlotte once was to him; the lover, serene and untroubled, content with her presence; and Charlotte, presenting the same candid, troubled gaze to both, uncertain as to the difference, if any, in her feelings for them. Godard fixes these images on the screen and invites us to see what lies behind them; at the same time, by inviting his characters to step out of character (in the interviews, for instance), he invites us to take another look at the façade. We are reminded not only that this is "truth twenty-four times a second," but that it is perhaps as true a truth as any.

When Charlotte questions Robert, *cinéma vérité* style, about his profession as an actor, for instance, we are aware that she is afraid he may be acting a part, simulating his love for her; and, captivated as we are by her, we share her concern. Robert, in his reply, gets tangled up in his definition that in the theatre he is speaking a given text, whereas in real life his words are his own; while we in turn get tangled up in the realisation that Bernard Noël, the actor playing Robert and simulating Robert's love with a given text, is here speaking his own words as a real-life actor and casting doubt on his own sincerity in the role of Robert. And in the last sequence of the film, Godard makes brilliantly imaginative use of this paradoxical confrontation between fact and fiction. Robert and Charlotte are moving inevitably towards a separation, yet they themselves are only obscurely aware of the fact, and cannot put even their half-knowledge into words. While they live out the fiction that they will meet again, marry and be happy, the play *Bérénice* presents the truth of their situation through a theatrical fiction. As they lie in bed waiting for the departure of Robert's plane, Charlotte cues him in rehearsing the part he will be playing in Marseilles. Hesitantly and stumbingly read, Racine's poetry describes, not the parting of Bérénice and Titus (the lines are selected and rearranged), but of Robert and Charlotte. A trick? Perhaps, but perfectly legitimate in an art where all is, after all, illusion.

Parenthetically: this is Godard's most subtle ending to date. His love of flamboyantly theatrical *dénouements* is satisfied, but this time it happens at double remove: by proxy, as it were, and also off-stage.

D'une infinie tristesse L'amour, c'est comme un jour, Ça s'en va . . . ça s'en va "Une Femme Mariée"

THE SUBTLETY OF THE ending is matched by a new clarity and assurance throughout. The whole film is organised with astounding precision, so that its patchwork elements are like the spokes of a wheel, leading outwards from the hub and

* Based on a pun: "What does it mean, regard?—Reguard, to keep twice—Then it must be very precious."

also providing support for the frame. The hub, of course, is Charlotte, while the frame is her circular voyage between husband and lover; and the whole superstructure of the film dovetails into an analysis of the cul-de-sac of her existence.

Charlotte is haunted by doubts as to whether her chance of true happiness lies with husband or lover: in his ruthless analysis, Godard demonstrates that there is no difference in kind, only in procedure. "Love," says the song which Charlotte sings, "is of infinite sadness. It vanishes like the day." The film opens with the tender, fragmented scenes of Robert and Charlotte making love, and almost identical imagery is used later for Pierre and Charlotte. The only real difference is between the old and the new, between husband and lover. Robert looks at Charlotte's body with adoration and utter contentment; Pierre looks with the same adoration, but instead of content, an uneasy bewilderment. Robert accuses Charlotte of using his razor, and when she protests, drops the matter; Pierre makes the same charge, and it ends in an ugly domestic scene. Godard further underlines this distinction by indicating the priorities of husband and lover: Robert and Charlotte make love, then get dressed, chat, and leave; Pierre and Charlotte get dressed for dinner, put their son to bed, entertain their guest, talk, listen to a record, then make love. And in the final sequence in the hotel room at the airport, a subtle change has occurred: the behaviour of Robert and Charlotte is turning into that of Pierre and Charlotte. A shot from the Pierre-Charlotte sequence, of four hands washing together in a hand-basin, is repeated, and an aura of domesticity has crept in: they talk, turn on the radio, walk in and out of the room, fetch a glass of water, remake the single beds, light a cigarette, and only then do they make love. The point is clinched by a repetition of the shot in which Pierre kisses Charlotte's temple, inaudibly saying "Je t'aime, je t'aime" over and over again; only this time Charlotte is in the role of suppliant, kissing Robert and muttering "Je t'aime, je t'aime."

Even if love is transient, however, it is of infinite tenderness, as the second verse of Charlotte's song affirms: "Like the day, it returns." The corollary to the lover who grows like the husband, is the husband who becomes like the lover and so closes the vicious circle. As remarkable as anything else in the film is the way in which Godard moves his actors and his camera in choreographing the re-establishment of their relationship by Charlotte and Pierre through several lengthy sequences. The first nervous flurry of their meeting at the airport, where they are unable to talk privately, resolves itself into a wonderfully easy lateral tracking shot as Pierre talks casually to Charlotte, their little son runs happily in circles round them, and Leenhardt and his secretary amble along a few paces behind.

Once in their own apartment, however, left alone for the first time, the constriction returns as they dress for dinner; the camera remains virtually fixed on Charlotte, while Pierre

moves nervously in and out of frame, trying to reassert his relationship with his sulkily withdrawn wife. Their uneasy politeness towards each other is emphasised and carried through to the wonderfully funny scene in which they edgily entertain Roger Leenhardt to after-dinner coffee and liqueurs, feverishly darting about the room attending to their duties as model hosts, while delivering an enthusiastic house-agent's eulogy on the delights of their ultra-modern home. Then, left alone again in their bedroom, a dispirited sullenness sets in; Pierre sits gloomily hunched against the wall, while Charlotte insists with maddening obstinacy on listening to the "Erotica" record which doesn't belong to them. Gradually, movement begins again; Charlotte goes to fetch a drink, leans desultorily against the wall, drags her feet along the carpet, lounges past Pierre; from there on it is only a step to a quarrel, a fight, and a run for bed. If anyone still harbours doubts as to Godard's technical competence, a study of his brilliant manipulation of this complex succession of linking moods and movements should be sufficient to dispel them once and for all.

"Soleil, voici le temps de la raison ardente"
Guillaume Apollinaire, quoted by
Roger Leenhardt in *"Une Femme Mariée"*

GODARD IS THE MOST open-ended of artists. He doesn't make problem pictures of the sort which deal with a controversial subject and come up with an answer. He assumes that the controversy is embedded in life, and maybe isn't even controversial. *Le Petit Soldat* refused to tackle the Algerian "problem", and yet, as Godard says, the film now stands as "witness to an epoch" and its complex moral repercussions. In *Une Femme Mariée*, Charlotte's questions to the doctor about contraception and sexual pleasure, and Robert's casual assertion of police corruption—both delivered as though the subjects were unexceptional and needed no apology or introduction—reveal far more about defensive attitudes, and also hurt more, than any amount of reasoned, documented attacks.

Nor does he start with an answer and work backwards in order to find the given data (perhaps one of the troubles with *The Red Desert*). "Intelligence," in Roger Leenhardt's definition, "is to understand before asserting"; and what we are left with at the end of *Une Femme Mariée* is simply a closely and passionately documented question-mark. Charlotte may yet meet with Robert again and marry him; she might go back to Pierre; she might kill herself; or she might just conceivably escape from the web, meet her Franz, and set sail like Odile to discover the wonders of the world. But we have the evidence, and whatever the outcome may be, as soon as we discover what it is, we will know why: because we understand Charlotte, and we understand the world which has shaped her.





THE
ROGER HUDSON INTERVIEWS
SECRET
TWO LIGHTING CAMERAMEN
PROFESSION



TWO OF DOUGLAS SLOCOMBE'S CLOSE-UPS FROM "FREUD".

OBJECT: To discover the size of the lighting cameraman's artistic contribution to film-making.

KNOWN FACTS: Decisions to be made by a production team include positioning and movement of the actors; positioning and movement of the camera; composition of the picture within the frame; choice of mood and lighting, focus, choice of lens, choice of film stock and, linked with this, exposure and development; the breaking down of scenes into shots.

MINIMUM RESPONSIBILITIES: The director instructs the actors in how to move and say their lines. The cameraman instructs the electricians in how to place the lights. The camera operator instructs the camera crew in positioning the camera and making the necessary provision for camera movement, and he aims it during shooting.

SLOCOMBE: Every film is made by a number of people, mostly professionals, who have all done more or fewer pictures. As it turns out, our profession enables us to work on more pictures than the director, and because of this we are usually more experienced than they are. I think most directors are willing to rely on the professionalism of the average cameraman and to leave a lot of the decisions to him.

LASSALLY: As a lighting cameraman you are responsible, in consultation with the other people involved, for getting the thing on to film. The picture must have a mood which is suitable to the story, and this is largely dependent on the photography. To take an obvious case: in a thriller, with people prowling about and hiding in corners, the suspense is lost if it's all as bright as day. If you want a light romantic feeling in a comedy, it shouldn't look like Goya's etchings. The cameraman can convey this mood mainly by his lighting but also by means of composition. Strictly speaking he is responsible for the entire visual presentation, but it must be in consultation with the director, and in carrying it out, with the camera operator. This is a kind of triumvirate working together, and it is personalities that decide who does more of what. If you get a director who comes from the stage, he may rely very heavily on the operator and lighting cameraman for the technical know-how of how to break the script down into shots. If, on the other hand, the director comes from the cutting-room, he will be able to do a lot more himself.

SLOCOMBE: To me the director's most important function is to

get the actors working along the level of the story. I think it's fair enough that one man should wish to put his personal imprint on it. It's fair enough that when he gets a cast together he should wish the actors, however good they may be individually, to conform to a certain pattern about the story. And his function, of course, extends to gathering about himself a crew whom he believes in and can work with. But I've always felt that this is where a director's credits should cease, unless they do in fact prove that he did more than that, and that beyond that point other people (the art director; the lighting cameraman; to some extent the editor) function as individuals.

A director may often say to a lighting cameraman that he didn't much care for yesterday's rushes, and that he thought the mood of the lighting was a bit *too* gay or *too* sinister. But he can only talk in general terms like that and he can only talk about the past. He can't make criticisms of the moment because the moment is unintelligible to everyone on the floor except the lighting cameraman. It's even unintelligible to the camera operator or another cameraman coming on the set, because he doesn't have in his head all the technical facts of film stock and aperture and he hasn't seen each of the lights coming on in turn. This means that, apart from small adjustments which can be made during processing, the director can't change the lighting (and therefore the mood) of a scene once it has been shot; and he never knows if the lighting is what he had in mind until the day after shooting. Few budgets will allow for re-shooting of a day's work just to change the lighting...

LASSALLY: My attitude differs from the general one, because I believe that these things—the composition, the splitting of the scene into set-ups, the camera movement, etc.—are all part of the director's function, and that he is exercising this only incompletely if he doesn't decide them, at least in broad outline. The choice of these things is as much part of the style as anything else; but very often it goes by default and it's left to the cameraman or the operator to make suggestions. Really great films are the ones in which one man's vision shines through. Eisenstein shines through in all his films. The fact that Tisse is an excellent cameraman, probably one of the world's best ever, doesn't oppose that, because he integrated himself with the vision of Eisenstein so that there was no conflict. He was the perfect servant to the master.

* * *

Douglas Slocombe's list of credits ranges from 'Hue and Cry', 'Kind Hearts and Coronets' and 'The Lavender Hill Mob', through 'The Smallest Show on Earth' and 'Circus of Horrors', to 'Freud' and 'The Servant'. Educated in Paris, he learnt to use a 16mm. camera at school. Unsuccessful in attempts to join a studio in France or England, he took to photo-journalism with a still camera and travelled Europe composing features for 'Life', 'Paris-Match' and other magazines. He shot documentary material up to the outbreak of war for an American film, 'Lights Out in Europe'. Was asked to join Ealing Studios by Cavalcanti as a cameraman-reporter who could go out and film on his own. During the war he was seconded to the forces with a Bell and Howell camera and a stock of film, spending most of his time on destroyers escorting Atlantic convoys. After the war started his long career as a lighting cameraman proper at Ealing.

Walter Lassally is best known for his work with Michael Cacoyannis, from 'A Girl in Black' to 'Zorba the Greek', his three films for Woodfall, 'A Taste of Honey', 'The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner', and 'Tom Jones', and earlier on Free Cinema films like 'We Are the Lambeth Boys'. He started as a photographer's general assistant just after the war. In late 1945 he joined a small unit making 16mm. industrial films; then Riverside Studios took him on as a clapper boy and loader, but closed ten months later. He worked on documentaries and second features and, in between, as photographer's assistant and as a projectionist. Joined Basic Films as a cameraman, and in 1954 worked on his first feature, Gavin Lambert's 'Another Sky'. Has worked in Greece and Pakistan, as well as in England.

HUDSON: So really it all depends on there being a director with this ability. What do you do with all the others?

LASSALLY: You confine yourself to seeing that the picture is visible and that the compositions are fair and that the lighting is reasonable. All purely technical considerations.

HUDSON: How much is left to the camera operator?

SLOCOMBE: I think most cameramen in this country work with operators they know very well and can trust. I work mostly with one man. I can leave him to lay the tracks and arrange the physical set-up, knowing he will do it well, while I start sketching in my lighting effects. He will ask me what lens to use, what to hold in a pan, what effects I am going to put in for him to make use of. The lighting cameraman will suggest an overall pattern and will go back to the camera several times to make sure this pattern is there.

LASSALLY: In Britain and America there is a kind of tradition that the operator works with the director on the set-ups and the way the scene is split up into shots, while the cameraman concentrates on the lighting. I'm a bit opposed to that: I like to operate on my own pictures, which I can do always with Cacoyannis but not in England. Here the director will usually decide if he wants a tracking shot or not, but the operator may suggest this as a solution. The director says, "Well, she comes in here and goes over there, then picks that up and goes over to there. What do you think?" And the operator says, "I think we should track from the door to the..." or maybe, "I think we should pan from the door." But it is the director and the camera operator who discuss this, while the cameraman listens in. In an interior shot particularly, the cameraman has his hands full with the lighting and is quite happy to leave other things to the operator. All the same, I feel that if the

director *isn't* going to make these decisions about camera movements, then the lighting cameraman himself ought to do it.

SLOCOMBE: Composition is one sphere in which the director usually does have a say on the image: the screen composition is a thing about which they care. The average director has a greater or lesser sense of "size" values. This isn't so much a sense of composition, which he may leave to the director of photography, as the sense of a desire to be close to or away from the main actor at a given moment, and to have other things placed with a greater or lesser emphasis. There are people with a very strong sense of composition, who like to look through the camera and actually compose the shot themselves. But really they are still just moving a series of images around. In drawing, one would say that they are putting in the outlines. The lighting cameraman will make a detailed image within these outlines.

HUDSON: So it is more likely to be the director or operator who actually makes the beautiful picture one sees at any given moment on the screen?

SLOCOMBE: No. Since the image is composed of light and shade, the tonal gradations decide the final effect much more than the sketch outline. If one had four blocks of wood in front of the camera and receding from it in a line, and they were all lit evenly from the front against a white background, one would see on the screen a fairly white image with four white squares of diminishing size. If, however, you were to take the light off the first block only, you would have a completely different image within the same frame—one large black square and three white ones. Within that pattern of frame there are one million patterns of light and shade that can be given more or less emphasis.

I've always felt very strongly that the only thing that really mattered was the story, and that anyone concerned has to do his best to translate the story on to the screen. I think the cameraman's share of this translation is a major one, because he is the man who is pulling the strings of the machinery which is producing the medium (i.e. light). Every single image can exist only in his mind irrespective of any set that is designed. An art director can give you a set that looks gleaming and white and pretty when you walk on to it. A cameraman can make this photograph dull grey with even greyer tones in it, or make it look black and sinister with just the odd shaft of light barely illuminating part of one wall. I often wonder whether the public realises that if ten different cameramen photographed the same situations on the same sets in the same pictures, they could give ten completely different results. The modern title "Director of Photography" is an attempt to recognise that the cameraman doesn't just photograph what already exists; but I prefer the credit the French used to give—"Images de . . ."

In the end the visual image is the lighting cameraman's; and I am sure that even those directors most associated with a personal visual style, like Hitchcock or Welles or Bergman, would acknowledge this. The interesting thing is that they have all used different lighting cameramen at different times, but they have invariably chosen a cameraman whose work has approximated to the style of their own earlier films, to the original style that had "jelled" as most suitable for what they had to say. Years ago I was terribly amused to read one of the newspaper critics referring to "Mr. Hitchcock's use of long shadows." They're not Mr. Hitchcock's shadows at all. Actually when he was on the set, with a hundred arc lamps all glowing out, he probably wouldn't even notice that there was a shadow there . . .

HUDSON: But surely the director can know what lighting a set means in terms of the end results? He can know that you can light a set to give a certain effect, and he can ask for that effect?

SLOCOMBE: Of course he can, and usually does. But in my experience I have only met one instance of a director actually having a chance to approve the style of the lighting. That was on *Freud*, where I did a month's tests before shooting. What John Huston wanted here was an overall style, and within that two separate styles, one for the dreams and one for the flashbacks, which would be so different that the audience

always knew where they were. I used very sharp photography for the main part of the film, to give the clarity of steel etchings and help the period feeling. For flashbacks I shot through a glass plate, treated to fuzz out all details except those most clearly recalled by the patient. For the dream sequences I aimed for a very contrasty, grainy effect of extreme black and white, in which chalky faces and relevant details would stand out like luminous figures in tunnels of blackness.

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HUDSON: How do the preparatory stages in a film go? How much time do you have to discuss a style?

LASSALLY: Well, there are a lot of discussions with the director and also with the art director and the camera operator. On *Tom Jones* it was decided that, if the staging was impeccably in period, then the camera technique could be absolutely modern. There were a lot of discussions about the colour, which we wanted very soft, and we made tests of different ways of shooting and of how different costumes would photograph. The whole photographic style was established within certain limits that would leave leeway in executing it. With *A Taste of Honey* we aimed for as rough and realistic a look as possible. We decided that it shouldn't look like a staged film, a studio film, and so in many sequences one was aiming at a newsreel sort of photography. A lot of cameramen couldn't conceive that this kind of roughness could be a deliberate stylistic effect. They just thought that it was incredibly sloppily photographed and that I didn't know any better. But, of course, the public accepted it. They know what real life looks like when it's photographed: they see it on television every day.

In *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, we shot the scenes in the Borstal in a tiny prefab up in North London, with no walls removed or anything like that. There were about twenty of us, actors and unit, all jammed in there. It's quite a job, but it works and it gives an atmosphere. Up to a point, such limitations are healthy because they force you away from the familiar pattern of lighting which arises from having it everywhere you want it. If you've got the whole set ringed with lamps and you can move them infinitesimally right or left, then you can do whatever you want. But this also leads to a kind of slackness, so that you don't, in fact, light it like real life. Limitations act as a good discipline. You are stimulated to work in a different way and you get a different look to the picture.

HUDSON: Do you get a stage where everybody is in on the discussion, or is it a matter of the director having discussions with each department separately?

LASSALLY: You get a kind of discussion between twelve or fifteen people. Very often you have the director, the cameraman, the operator, the art director, the editor, the assistant director, the production people, the continuity girl, and that's as far as it goes.

HUDSON: Do all the technical considerations—the key of the lighting, the grain of the film, whether you are going to use a wide angle lens for certain scenes—do these things get discussed before you start?

LASSALLY: Not necessarily before you start. They might be discussed at the time on the floor, because consultation goes on all the time. But there's no hard and fast rule because it depends on the personalities involved. You might have a director who concentrates more on the actors and leaves the visual side to you and the camera operator, or you might have a director who considers that the visual style of the film is part of the general style and will, therefore, leave very little to you. The best relationship arises where you see eye to eye. Michael Cacoyannis, for instance, has a very strong visual style, but it happens to coincide with my own. He leaves the visual style to me but, by leaving it to me, he gets what he wants. He writes his scripts in shots anyway and the type of shot is predetermined. He'll say, "I want a shot in this

EXAMPLES OF DOUGLAS SLOCOMBE'S CAMERAWORK FOR "FREUD". RIGHT: STREET SCENE AND INTERIOR LIGHTING. ABOVE: SCENES "SHOT THROUGH A GLASS PLATE, TREATED TO FUZZ OUT DETAILS EXCEPT THOSE MOST CLEARLY RECALLED BY THE PATIENT."



direction. A medium shot with two people coming up the hill and entering the house." And I'll set up the shot and, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, he'll look through the camera and he'll say, "Yes, fine." Or he won't even look through the camera, and will find that it's fine only when he finally sees it on the screen. This kind of relationship can only be established when there is that much rapport between the people concerned.

* * *

This is a very similar point to Douglas Slocombe's assertion that the great directors choose their cameramen because they have a style which is suited to what the director has to say, and then leave them to it. Slocombe's experience has been of even less discussion than this; but he has never worked with one director over several films, as Lassally has with Cacoyannis and with Tony Richardson.

SLOCOMBE: A director may say, "You remember that Orson Welles picture? Well, I rather like that sort of style. Could you aim at something like that?" Obviously one would never do anything like it, because that was one man's style and you couldn't copy it. But this sort of suggestion does give one a general line to follow. From that moment onwards, however, every square inch in a 20,000 square foot picture is the cameraman's own. It is his personal decision whether it's dark or light, whether there is going to be a shadow over there, a bit of light there. A good art director will give you a whole set in case you need it, and you may suddenly decide to throw the entire thing away and merely light one eye of the actor coming through.

HUDSON: Don't you go back to the director with this decision?

SLOCOMBE: No. Sometimes one will sort of say to the director, "By the way, I hope you won't mind. I've thrown all this away and I've just done that." And he'll say, "Swell, swell. It's a marvellous idea." Or perhaps he'll say, "Are you quite sure you ought to do that . . .?"

HUDSON: So in fact the standard of the end result visually is going to depend on the lighting cameraman's affinity to the script. Does this mean that you think of film-making as the work of different people each doing what they feel individually is right for the story, rather than that ideal of a team which is often assumed to be the characteristic that sets the film apart from the other arts?

SLOCOMBE: I think generally that is true. Admittedly round-table conferences do take place at the beginning of every picture, but what is said there is always in halting or indefinite

A SHOT FROM CACOYANNIS' "ELECTRA", CAMERAMAN WALTER LASSALLY.



terms, because the terms can only be indefinite at that stage. HUDSON: How much time do you spend on the actual script, working out how you are going to light it, before you get on the floor?

SLOCOMBE: With most pictures, I think I have had a week, sometimes two weeks, sometimes only one day. I think every cameraman differs here, but I am very much a mood person. The main technical consideration is that a film is composed of from 600 to upwards of a thousand shots, and each one of these shots has to match to the one that goes before it and the one that comes after it, whether they were taken at different times or in different places. When it comes to the actual shot, I'm inclined to do a thing as I see it, almost on the spur of the moment, while keeping the other technical factors at the back of my mind. If the director has organised the scene very simply and I have thought of any exciting visual possibilities, either in reading the script or at the moment on the floor, I'll try to steer it into the patterns needed to create the effect I have in mind.

HUDSON: Is there anything else the cameraman needs to know in advance?

LASSALLY: He must know what the intended sequence of events is going to be. For instance, you may have a day sequence followed by a couple of transition shots or dusk sequences, and then you go into night. Sometimes it happens much faster than it would in life, and so in these one or two shots you have got to make a smooth, unnoticeable transition. This is all very well. You plan your sequences according to the script. But then, during the editing, the director decides to take that evening sequence and put it before the last day sequence; and then, of course, you're cooked. This is what happened in the first part of *Tom Jones*: it was tremendously condensed in editing, so all the transitions have gone and you find yourself going from night to day and back again. Well, this isn't my fault. The lighting cameraman doesn't really have any contact with the editing stage.

HUDSON: Do you have a routine technical way of approaching a scene?

LASSALLY: Not a routine technical way, but there are basic technical considerations: the location of the scene—whether it's an interior or an exterior, night or day. If it has to be simulated, i.e., if you are shooting in a studio and there is a balcony or French windows and a garden, obviously you must create a feeling that outside is outside and inside is inside. When you first come on to a set it all looks entirely false, however well it's made. The feeling of reality in an interior/exterior depends entirely on the cameraman. If he puts equal strength lighting on from several directions, the outdoors won't look like outdoors. On a sunny day, light out of doors falls from one direction; on a grey day, it falls completely and utterly evenly without shadows. And this is not the way lamps normally light anything. So you have to re-create the physical attributes of natural light in the studio. If you are shooting in a real house, you have to deal with the technical problem that the ratio of the intensity of light outside and the light inside is generally much more than the film stock can accept. Either the scene will appear so dark inside that it will look as though it's not lit at all, or else the outside will look like a snow scene. So you have to balance the two by putting filters on the windows or lighting the inside more intensely to match the outside.

Beyond this, I approach an interior with the source lighting strongly in mind. I look at a room and say, "Now, if this were a real room and the lamps were lit, or the windows were open, how would the light fall?" And to some extent I'll reproduce that to give the feeling of reality. You can't follow that rule all the way, however, because then women would look ugly. Sometimes you must compensate for other reasons, but the main one is in order to present the actors in the best possible light. Some of the men are every bit as difficult as the women. In fact all Curt Jurgens used to say to me on *Psyche 59* was, "You can't tell my eyes are blue." And it was a black and white film.

* * *

With Doug Slocombe I went through the technical decisions that have to be taken.

CHOICE OF FILM STOCK One chooses a film stock as a draughtsman will choose his grade of paper and his drawing medium—with grain in mind and overall contrast. The faster stocks give one a coarser grain, the slower stocks a finer grain. Between them, there are all sorts of possibilities. In fact, on several of my pictures I have taken an established film stock with an established exposure and development technique and have altered the last two to suit myself. I started this with *Freud* and used it further on *The L-Shaped Room* and *The Servant*. I got several laboratories to develop the stock contrary to the Kodak set instructions and against their own better judgment, which gave me twice the approved film speed and a very interesting contrast. The advantage of the high speed was that I could get very deep focus with it. Joe Losey had scenes in *The Servant* playing for four minutes or more, with the actors moving about from foreground to background. I could keep them in focus all the time because the speed enabled me to stop right down. For the dream sequences in *Freud*, where I wanted coarse grain and extreme contrast, I shot on positive stock instead of negative, made high contrast dupe negatives, and printed from them.

CHOICE OF LENS The lighting cameraman usually chooses the lens, because only the cameraman really weighs up what the different lenses will do, their effect on the finished image. After the walk-through, the operator usually says, "What lens, gov.?" and the cameraman tells him.

Close-ups are normally shot on a long-focus lens. This is to throw the background out of focus and to change the perspective of the features (and improve them). A 3" or 4" lens is used, and this avoids bits of set jutting out behind the face and distracting attention just as a tear is running down the actress's cheek. If the background behind the close-up is too fussy, the lighting cameraman may suggest that the fussy furniture is cleared away for that shot, or that the actor is moved to a plainer background.

A very wide angle lens would be used to take in as much as possible of the set when the camera can't get very far back from the action. We used a 14mm. lens, the widest there is, to shoot the scene in the home of the fiancée's parents in *The Servant*. It was a real interior in Chiswick House, and we wanted to show as much as possible to over-accentuate the formality. As we were cramped for space, we had to use a wide angle lens to get everything in frame.

FOCUS Again the cameraman is usually the only one who knows what an image will end up like, so he is the only one who knows what the focus will be. To this extent it's his decision. Deep focus right through a film would be a company decision, because more lights have to be used to achieve it and they cost money. If three people in a scene were all talking, and they could not all be kept in focus at the same time, one might give the director the choice.

EXPOSURE One varies one's light levels to give the mood one wants in terms of gradations: i.e., strong lighting gives one a high key result with white and light tones predominating, weaker lighting gives a low key with blacks and greys dominant. One might also vary overall light levels upwards in order to stop down more and get deeper focus, or downwards in order to throw away focus or take advantage of very small sources of light. In *The Servant* and *The L-Shaped Room*, a large number of light sources were hidden within the sets, behind the furniture or in niches in the walls, or sometimes behind actors themselves. With a higher light level, larger light sources would have been needed.

FRAMING The director usually says first what he wants you to hold in the frame, because he is the one who has worked out how to tell the story. He says, "I want a two-shot here," or "I want a tight head-and-shoulders." The director may use a viewfinder (a "Tewe", which allows you to see the different size frame different lenses give) for lining up. The cameraman will interpret his requests to what he considers the most suitable lens and camera distance to give that framing.

DEVELOPMENT Different forms of development can help to alter contrast ratios, but this is also a function of lighting contrast on the floor. The cameraman comes back after the editing has been done, if he is available, to control the grading.

The "grader" in a film laboratory is the technician who specifies the exposure to be given during printing to each section of the negative. Unless otherwise instructed, he will normally grade to give a standard range of grey tones: this approach ensures that joining scenes match, but it may also iron out other elements that were intentional.

* * *

HUDSON: How did all this find expression in a particular film, say, *The Servant*?

SLOCOMBE: I think Joe Losey is the most creative man I have ever worked with, and the one who knew most about what he wanted. He went to great pains to feel that I was in sympathy with what he had in mind. The camera movement was all his own, and the actors' positioning and movement, but he left me alone to work out my own patterns beyond that.

Joe asked for three styles to show the three phases in the history of the house. In actual fact, I ran the styles into one another gradually as the film went on. The house itself was merely a set made of painted paper flats, with furniture that was hired and put in and with painted backings outside the windows. One had to convey the feeling of this house in all its moods, and to start with one wanted the sense of a house that was empty but nevertheless had possibilities. I shot the opening scenes in an overall grey tone that showed the bare bones of the building and its intrinsic coldness. Then we wanted to make things look exciting with new furniture, new belongings, so I shot it with a certain glossy contrast. Then, as the servant takes over, we wanted some things to show meaningfully for their own sake, wanted to find sinister meanings in objects that before seemed merely pretty and inoffensive. I used the lighting to rub out a number of things that had to be forgotten, and bring forward new elements that had to be given sinister implications.

For the final orgy and degradation, Joe was at great pains not to emulate anyone else's orgies. I was asked to suggest that more was going on than actually was. Just an eye, a hand, pools of blackness. One tried to show all the decadence of those *fin de siècle* paintings in which everything is slightly ornate and overdone. If it had been normally lighted the scene would have looked nothing. Everyone on the floor was saying, "What's this supposed to be, gov.?" And one would just smile. Everyone was amazed in rushes the next day, when only little dots of light could be seen.

"ZORBA THE GREEK", FOR WHICH LASSALLY WON AN OSCAR FOR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY.



FESTIVALS 65

CANNES



"THE MOMENT OF TRUTH".

LUNCHTIME AT CANNES: drenching rain, and an angry machine-gun rattle above our heads, as the flags over the festival cinema are whipped by the wind. Down the beach marches a resolute little procession of bathing-suited girls, each clutching a large golf umbrella. The photographers, unprotected, skirmish resignedly about them. No doubt someone is being elected Miss something-or-other (my favourite odd election this year: a lady with the title, which one hopes to be honorary, of Miss Crimson Executioner). Certainly, they are doing what they can to keep old legends alive.

Cannes will survive until the last starlet is shot down on the Carlton beach. But from its dominating position at the start of the festival season it should be able to command not only the best glamour (this year, to judge from the French press, Mr. Sean Connery's tattoo marks were considered the most appealing thing in sight), but the best films. And here something went decidedly wrong, although it would be difficult to say precisely what. Resnais, Truffaut, Demy and Antonioni are not working; Fellini and Olmi haven't finished their new films; Godard has, but *Alphaville* wasn't entered; Visconti, possibly conjecturing that a second Grand Prix was unlikely so soon after *The Leopard*, withheld his latest picture; and the festival, for some reason best known to itself, decided that it could afford to turn down Ray's *Charulata*. Rex Harrison, most diplomatic of jurors, told an interviewer how greatly he was enjoying the chance to see so many good films. It would have been hard to find a critic to agree with him.

My own introduction to the festival came by way of Juan

Antonio Bardem's *The Player* *Pianos*, which offers the Costa Brava, suicide, seduction, aphorisms about Life, sodden parties, and the sight of Melina Mercouri, wearing nothing more substantial than a bunch of gladioli, advancing rapaciously and rather alarmingly on Hardy Kruger. Still reeling slightly under this blow, one found oneself watching Mai Zetterling's first feature, *Loving Couples*, which is the sort of film calculated to put a rational foundation under irrational prejudices against the Swedish cinema. Miss Zetterling has done a very accomplished job, and her cameraman has served her handsomely, with the prettiest birch trees, midsummer's eve champagne party and black-coated graveside ceremonies outside Bergman. Her theme: three girls in a maternity hospital, and the all too familiar train of assorted events that has brought them there. The film has its origin in a series of novels, apparently once considered rather daring, produced by a Swedish woman writer early in this century. But this only leads, unluckily, to the reflection that in Sweden nothing changes, or indeed seems likely to change. Sex and glumness; obstetrics and birch trees: one may take it from Bergman, but not yet from Miss Zetterling.

Too many films like this set up a powerful resistance. One begins to feel trapped in the cinema; one remembers Truffaut's loving concern that the audience, who are after all consenting to immure themselves for two hours in darkness, should be rewarded for their trouble. It took Ichikawa's *Tokyo Olympiad* to bring the blaze of air and light into the festival cinema; and he did it by a splendid refusal to be cowed by the ghost of Berlin 1936, and the memory of Leni Riefenstahl's encircling cameras.

Ichikawa's film is compounded of national pride (perfectly legitimate, and coming through very strongly in the unfailingly moving scenes of the Olympic torch on its journey through the villages of Japan), and that sense of strain and achievement, coupled with a wry appreciation of everything absurd to the onlooker in athletic striving, which one found in last year's *Alone on the Pacific*. His 104 cameramen make the Tokyo Olympics look bustling human and splendidly unpompous. Anne Packer breaks the tape with a touching and gentle smile (a shot I don't remember from the TV coverage); an Italian walker breaks it crossly, as though he felt his race had gone on quite long enough; the pole vaulters lunge and leap in a darkening stadium. The film keeps pace with the hero of the games, the Ethiopian marathon winner, in a sequence that achieves, merely by the camera's persistent hanging on, a sense of dreamlike loneliness and effort. Behind him in the race, lesser competitors are pausing to choose their drinks from the stands, like children on a picnic outing. Ichikawa had technical resources not available thirty years ago, and deploys them magnificently. This is a close-up film, in its total effect if by no means in its many sweeping camera movements: a work song, perhaps, where Riefenstahl's was a hymn to power.

It was an odd coincidence that Francesco Rosi's *The Moment of Truth*, another film of quality in the main festival arena, should also score so heavily through its blazing colour camerawork (Gianni Di Venanzo) and its close-up athletic detail. Rosi's story, tolerably slight and unstressed, is the familiar one of the poor boy who becomes a sporting hero and finds that it is still tough at the top. It doesn't gain greatly by being dubbed into Italian; and an Italian so fluent, at that, that a conversation between two village boys about their work prospects sounds more like a TV debate between economists.

The bullfight, however, is the thing. From the training school, where boys push horns mounted on bicycle wheels at other boys ineptly wielding the muleta, we move into the ring itself, and realise that we have also been learning something with them. A bungling matador makes some ineffectual passes; Miguelin (Rosi's star, and an actual bullfighter) shows how it should be done. Because Rosi doesn't have to fake up the fights, one gets a strongly involving sense of just what the matador's technical mastery means, in terms of the difference between the brilliant and the merely adequate: not the old blood and sand mystique, but the grace of a supreme athletic performance. The film opens with a ferociously well shot sequence of the Easter ceremonies at Seville, with sweating

labourers shuffling through the streets under the weight of a great golden altar-piece. Rosi's sentiments may be worn on his sleeve; but when an occasion excites him (as it does here; as it did in *Salvatore Giuliano*) he can film great documentary.

More documentary, if that hasn't become a derogatory word: Chris Marker's *Le Mystère Koumiko*, a festival fringe film about Japan, shot more or less at Olympics time. Marker's approach is as usual wary and oblique, compelling by reason of its very air of take it or leave it detachment. His unseen interviewer asks sympathetic questions, quotes odd statistics; kittens frolic in a box; a *Parapluies de Cherbourg* poster hoves in sight, and then we are above a street crossing, with all the pedestrians equipped with bright umbrellas. The camera rides on a formidable modern rail system, or lingers over a poster. Not a travelogue, but a travel essay; nobody's last word on Japan, but very much somebody's first.

Meanwhile, the younger French directors have been looking at Paris, and the sketch film *Paris vu par* is the result. This film, shot around the various *quartiers* in 16mm. colour, was made in conditions which allowed the six directors (Godard, Chabrol, Rouch, Rohmer, Douchet, Pollet) maximum freedom from film-making paraphernalia; a return to the original nouvelle vague simplicities, coupled with the newer techniques of direct cinema. Rouch films a husband and wife quarrel, followed by the wife's encounter with a young man on the point of suicide; all done as near as possible in one take, and wonderfully close and holding. Godard, working this time with the American Al Maysles, shuttles a girl between lovers; Chabrol invades a bourgeois interior; Douchet is frolicsome on the Left Bank. Each of the anecdotes, oddly enough, is almost classically neat and ironic, as though in deliberate counterpoint to the freewheeling cameras. Total effect as free as air, unportentious, intelligent, with no one stepping out of line to hammer the cinematic or the sociological points. Could we conceivably expect anything like this from six of our own directors? I suspect they couldn't prevent solemnity from breaking in.

Elsewhere, there was a chance to see *Le Coup de Grâce*, directed by Jean Cayrol and Claude Durand. Resnais stimulates the urge to direct in his writers, and this film has obvious affinities with *Muriel* in its untidy family relationships, mysteriously hovering stranger, memories of wartime betrayals, and haunting seaport locations (Bordeaux, not Boulogne). But Ken Tynan, who has lately been riding the hobbyhorse of writer versus director, really ought to see this clinching piece of counter-evidence: Cayrol's ideas, without Resnais' execution, make a sad, sympathetic, indecisive jumble of a film.

A much happier writer-director combination, although not everyone seemed to find it so, was that of Cocteau (or at least the shade of Cocteau) and Franju, whose *Thomas l'Imposteur* will be France's entry at Berlin. Red Cross lorries drive through the first war countryside, under the command of a *grande dame* (Emmanuèle Riva, perhaps not quite *grande dame* enough) of the French V.A.D. Thomas, the boy touched with the familiar Cocteau magic, rides with her like a talisman. The war of the shattered villages clashes with the mock war of a Red Cross fête, with children and old ladies clambering about toy trenches; then the dream zone of the actual war, with Thomas stationed at the sea end of the front, in a hallucinatory landscape of mist, sand dunes, observation posts, where horses wearing gas masks loom up out of the night. A slightly old-fashioned film, with some scenes (notably the opening ball) obviously under-staged; but haunting in its grey, muted landscapes, its inescapable romanticism, its feeling of having walked out of time. I found it immensely more worthwhile than France's official war entry, Pierre Schoendoerffer's *La 317ème Section*, which looks back no further than Dien Bien Phu and studies the course of a doomed jungle patrol. A French paper's proud comment was that this was as good as an American war film. Fair enough, and brilliantly shot by Coutard; but the Franju is as good as a French war film.

There were other films worth watching, if not all the time. Kobayashi's *Kwaidan*, for instance, has a very promising subject, in the form of three ghost stories adapted from



AMERICAN IN PARIS. JEAN DOUCHET'S EPISODE OF "PARIS VU PAR".

Lafcadio Hearn. The last is a muddle of ectoplasmic sword-play; the first like a drawn-out version of the scene of the husband's return to his phantom wife in *Ugetsu*; and the whole has that soporific effect produced when a director has too obviously fallen in love with his own dream world. All the same, the middle story yielded something: a medieval naval battle, like a barge-borne tournament, ending with the ladies of the vanquished clan plunging over the side, their robes floating behind them, into a sea frothing with blood. Another curiosity: Wojciech Has's magnificently titled *Manuscript Found at Saragossa*. Picaresque Spanish adventure; more ghostly swordsmen; hideous eye-gouging (the Japanese film had even more disagreeable ear-chopping); the black-robed Inquisition lurking among the rocks to pounce on the traveller. All done rather heavily, but with some bravura pastiches of eighteenth century narrative, with every character encountered showing a spirited determination to launch into flashback memoirs. After some hundred minutes, and with eighty more to go, the lights were brusquely switched on in the cinema, and we saw no more. A pity: Has's film is constructed on the Chinese box principle, of stories within stories, and one was intrigued enough to wonder what he might be keeping at the centre.

Not a good festival, one felt at the time. Not perhaps as bad as all that, one feels in retrospect, even though there was nothing to electrify. Britain, it ought to be recorded, had a very sound hand (*The Knack*, *The Hill*, *The Ipcress File*—none of them British-directed, but let that pass) and played it for all it was worth. Mr. Saltzman exuded a wonderfully chubby impresario's confidence; Sean Connery arrived in a brawl of photographers; and the Daleks paraded the Croisette while a children's band played (did it really, or was I mishearing?) 'Swanee River'. There was also the sight of Kevin Brownlow explaining with patient courtesy that his *It Happened Here*

"THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR".





"WALKOVER": JERZY SKOLIMOWSKI, ACTOR AND DIRECTOR.

was not intended as a document about the *French* resistance, and that the final scene of partisans shooting down collaborators was no reflection on anything that happened, or might have happened, twenty years ago. This episode seemed to cause the audience much more concern than the statements of Fascist dogma which have worried some people here. But the ghosts of the occupation and the ghetto still stalk the European cinema. The Brownlow press conference made it oddly apparent that we were felt to be the outsiders, without right of entry into this haunted graveyard.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

LIKE THE MAIN FESTIVAL, the Fourth International Critics' Week was not unduly burdened by masterpieces this year. A curious Spanish study of a murderous Don Juan (*Amador*), an "interesting" French film set in Israel at the time of the Eichmann trial (*La Cage de Verre*), a much over-praised Czech film (*Diamonds of the Night*), a dreary American independent film about a mental defective of 40 (*Andy*). There were some compensations of course: Kevin Brownlow's *It Happened Here*; a curious attempt to film *Finnegan's Wake*; and a hilarious, if too systematically zany, Israeli satire, *A Hole in the Moon!*. Zionists, pioneers, the whole Israeli mystique pulverised in the style of *Hallelujah the Hills*.

But there was one film which justified the whole week: Jerzy Skolimowski's *Walkover*. This is the original title, by the way; it would seem that Polish boxing terms are the same as English. Skolimowski, a product of the Lodz school, has already directed one feature film—*Rysopis*—but he is best known as the co-scriptwriter of *Knife in the Water* and *The Innocent Sorcerers*. It is easy enough to describe the tone of *Walkover*. Anyone who knows the two films Skolimowski co-authored will recognise the same coolness, that of the uncommitted outsider in a very committed society. His hero is the man who doesn't want to sing party songs, who doesn't want to be on factory committees, the man who is thrown out of university because he is a "disturbing element". The hooligan, to use that much beloved Slav term.

Andrzej is about to turn thirty. After being thrown out of his engineering college, he has made a kind of living going round the country participating in boxing matches for "beginners". After fifty or so of these combats, people have begun to catch on to the fact that he is no longer a beginner. Arriving in a new town, an ex-schoolmate (actually the girl who denounced him years ago) tries to persuade him to take a job in the local factory. He cannot resist entering the semi-finals of another of these beginners' contests, and he wins yet again. The girl, however, has failed in her first job, and Andrzej decides to skip town with her, especially since the finals that night will put him up against a much tougher opponent. The end of the film succeeds in being at once surprising, logical, and ambiguous.

Much harder to describe is Skolimowski's style. The photography is silvery grey and sharply fuzzy. Although the film (which lasts seventy minutes) is made up of only thirty-four shots, the effect is excitingly disjointed, syncopated. It would seem that Skolimowski's method is entirely paradoxical, not to say dialectical. From a combination of opposites comes a new synthesis. *Walkover* is extremely subjective: from time to time the action stops while the hero confronts the camera in what can only be termed soliloquies. And yet the author also manages to achieve, through the clear-eyed rigour of his approach, a kind of desperate objectivity. This is all the more remarkable in that Skolimowski not only wrote and directed the film, he also boxed it: that is to say, he plays the principal character.

Outside the festival, completely outside in the Film Market on the Rue d'Antibes, was Chabrol's most recent film: *Le Tigre aime la chair fraîche*. This was an unpretentious but brilliantly put together send-up of the spy film. It would seem (both from this film and his episode in *Paris vu par*) that Chabrol really has found his way at last, that of the Ubu-esque super-charged satire. Here, given a dwarf, a mess of Turks, a strange Egyptian plantation all of which—including the house—is incomprehensibly under one foot of water, and various other grotesque elements, he has made a consistently entertaining film.

Back to the Palais, for my last surprise: the Czech film *The Shop in the High Street*. Directed by Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos, this is no new wave film. In fact, some of the more bandwagon French critics heaped scorn on it because it wasn't new and adventurous. Maybe not, but innovation is not all. It seems to me that our two directors, aided by one of the great actors of our times—Joseph Kroner—have succeeded in a terrifyingly difficult task: that of making a film about the Occupation and the persecution of the Jews which is neither perfunctory nor predictable.

Of course, they have succeeded for the same reasons Munk did in his *Passenger*: their film is about two people, not about a problem. Successfully avoiding both grandiloquence and over-emphasis, the film swings breathtakingly between farce and tragedy. A poor relation, Brtko, is made "Aryan manager" of a Jewish button shop by his Nazi brother-in-law. Discovering, however, that the nice old lady who runs the store not only doesn't seem to know what Aryan means, but also hasn't made a penny in years, Brtko—who is a nice guy at heart—accepts the same charity from the Jewish community which has kept the old lady alive for years. They get on quite well, in fact, in spite of her deafness and total unawareness of what is going on around her, until the time comes when the Jews are to be deported. Easy sympathy is then put to the test: should he try to hide her somehow and risk the fate of the Jew-lover, or should he deliver her over to the authorities? His decision is not made any easier by the old lady's complete inability to understand what he is talking about; and his attempts to explain something which is, of course, in the widest sense inexplicable, meet with failure until, racial memories stirred, at last a glimmer of understanding comes into her face: "Pogrom". But now it is too late, and the directors successfully switch into a legitimately hysterical high gear finale.

RICHARD ROUD

IN THE PICTURE

Perspectives 1970

A RECENT SURVEY of the habits and tastes of London filmgoers contained one small, intriguing statistic. One per cent, the researchers found, chose the films they saw because of an interest in "the producer, director or author." The Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie has just published a brilliantly analytical survey of the French scene (*Perspectives 1970: Bulletin d'Information No. 91*), in which the same question gets a rather different answer. Eleven per cent of the sample questioned by the French researchers gave the director's name as one of the key factors in choosing a film. A tiny fact which, if it can be taken at face value, perhaps helps just a little in explaining our respective cinemas.

The main findings of the French survey are familiar: the predominantly young audience; the 37 per cent who never go to a cinema; the habits broken when young families make their demands on time, and never resumed. Unlike other investigators, the French researchers don't consider that cars are greatly to blame for the audience decline. Or, rather, they believe that, if some people prefer driving cars to going to the cinema, other people are using cars to get there. If you want to know whether, say, car-owning farm labourers are more likely filmgoers than non-motorised farmers, this is the place to look.

Beneath the statistical common ground, however, lie some basic differences. An oddity of the London survey was that it didn't seem to recognise the minority audience as a measurable factor. An oddity of the French survey is how far it goes in the other direction. Apart from the teenage regulars, the French cinema audience is apparently moving steadily closer in its social composition to the traditional theatre public. It is becoming, they say, a collection of *amateurs éclairés*.

Are our national audiences really so dissimilar, or is it that the investigators are starting from different positions? The Centre Nationale paper reports that the average Frenchman looks to the theatre for any solid cultural experience, to TV for information, and to the cinema for diversion. On the whole, he dislikes foreign films in original language versions; he may even (32 per cent) dislike them dubbed. He can be puritanical (complaints of shots of the naked Brigitte Bardot in *Le Mépris*), and he finds many of the new films totally baffling

("j'ai rien compris du tout," a forlorn refrain which runs through a whole group of answers). At the same time, he is younger and better educated than he used to be; and of the older people, it is the educated who are likely to stay with the cinema, while the rest drift away.

Apart from these imponderables of taste, there are the measurable statistics. France has by no means reached the near-saturation point of TV coverage achieved in Britain and the United States; and the decline in cinema attendance consequently started later, and has proceeded more manageably. This has been a country with a high level of production and a low *per capita* level of film consumption. In 1957, after rising figures for audience attendance during the 1950's, 8 million people went to the cinema every week. In 1963 (the last full year covered by the survey), the figure was down to 5.6 million. An international graph shows the British attendance figures plummeting most dramatically and unrestrainedly downwards; and the survey points to them as an awful warning. One thing it doesn't take into account is that we started with far and away the highest rate of attendance for any West European country, and so had further to fall.

"The crisis is one of supply as much as demand," states the survey, implying that audiences might well be larger if cinema-going were easier and more agreeable. In Britain the Rank/ABC policy has been to close down cinemas and streamline operations. But closing cinemas, of course, is one way of accelerating the rate of decline, by making it that much harder for a potential audience to become an actual one. The Americans have gone rather the other way lately, with heavy capital investment in building and modernisation; and, co-incidentally or otherwise, the decline has been checked.

It is around these arguments that the survey frames its conclusions. The recommendation is that cinemas should follow their customers, as and when necessary, to the new suburban developments; that they should be small, modern, and preferably

grouped together, sharing such things as parking space, on the principle that an entertainment centre holds out more promise than a solitary building. Cinemas are suggested in big stores, to catch the woman shopper. On top of this, there is the idea of reorganising programming, so that cinemas would acquire their own recognisable personalities and audience loyalties. Repeatedly, the investigators found that the audience which is "*calme, silencieux et bien élevé*" (a matchless French definition) was being kept away by the teenage noise-makers. In effect, their suggestion is that there is no longer a public, a shapeless lump, but a whole series of minorities, who can be attracted by modern design and radical techniques of salesmanship.

An introductory article by Augustin Girard, of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, goes a stage further. M. Girard is slightly defensive about bringing the techniques of market research and statistical measurement to bear at all on questions of art. His justification, though, is the change which has taken place all over Western Europe during the last decade. "The increase in the demand for the cultural good things of life is without precedent. We are watching not a slow evolutionary process but what would in biology be called a 'mutation'." The 'traditional' forms of culture (theatre, cinema, music) must understand the terms on which they are competing with sports cars and skiing holidays; and to do this they must know the facts about themselves. "The very nature of state intervention," says M. Girard, "must be reconsidered. Public authority can no longer limit its role to that of providing controls and regulations. The State cannot but become an initiator, a source of stimulus and organisation." Arguments will be fought backwards and forwards over this ground during the next few years, and M. Malraux' Ministry is flying the standard tentatively hoisted here by Miss Jennie Lee. The Centre Nationale document, with its splendidly marshalled statistics, ensures that the combatants have ammunition to hand.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

"I TRE VOLTÌ". THE ANTONIONI EPISODE, ABOUT PRINCESS SORAYA'S SECRET SCREEN TEST.



Warsaw Notes

DURING THE LAST TWO years films made by novelists turned director have been widely discussed in Warsaw. Tadeusz Konwicki, Jerzy Stawinski, Aleksander Scibor-Rylski, Josef Hen—these are names associated with this new development, which has so far produced one film which I consider to be outstanding (Konwicki's *Hallowe'en*), and several others more or less enjoyable and skilfully made. Now in his forties, Tadeusz Konwicki is the outstanding writer of his generation. His latest novel, *A Modern Dream-Book*, was one of the literary events of last year. His just completed film, *Salto*, takes up some of the motifs of this novel.

The film tells the story of a small, forgotten town, and of a man who suddenly and mysteriously turns up there. He seems to be searching for something indefinite and at the same time to be escaping from some vague danger. He is uncertain and on edge, and haunted by memories. He adopts an attitude to the townspeople which implies that they share these memories; and, strange as it sounds, they join him in this game. Disconnected encounters, conversations and arguments ensue. The drama reaches its climax in the last sequence, when the stranger leads them in a mysterious dance, the "Salto". This is supposed to bring complete spiritual release to the members of this strange dancing party; in fact it brings nothing but an aftermath of shame and disgust. The stranger's wife unexpectedly appears in the town, and tells everybody that her husband is a "myth-weaver": a man whose instability causes him to disappear from home, abandoning his wife and children to their fate.

Salto is not about the power of mystification in general, but about a clearly defined mood. Its theme is the myths which have grown up around a generation whose characters and minds were shaped during the war, who tasted its glories, suffered its humiliations, and shared in its ideological conflicts. They emerged from it shattered, and after twenty years which have seen the creation of a new society and a new awareness, they still bear its scars. Film-makers like Wajda and Munk have confronted the

legend of this generation; Polish writers find in it a recurring theme. No other country seems to have quite this obsessive drama of recollection. Now Konwicki's film comes as the most serious attempt so far to expose the attitudes involved. And it is no accident that Zbigniew Cybulski, who created the prototype of this hero in *Ashes and Diamonds*, plays the "stranger" here.

Although set in a different context and a different key, Konwicki's *Hallowe'en* touched on similar problems. In *Salto* he speaks in a tone that has at once a tragic and an ironic ring, laying bare his subject with amazing delicacy. The inhabitants of this placid, sleepy town are living an unreal life, and their serenity is skin-deep. Then their calm is suddenly disturbed by a man who appears like a phantom from the world they have left behind them, who brings about a confrontation of attitudes, lays bare their scars, and makes his final, unsuccessful challenge in the mysterious ritual of the "Salto" dance. In this morass of deep-seated grievances, Konwicki perceives an absurdity and a moral and mental laziness which breed escapism. What also distinguishes his film is its humour—that bitter, ironically self-critical tone, shot through with pain, that is so characteristic of his prose.

BOLESŁAW MICHAŁEK

Taken to Court

THE UNITED STATES Supreme Court has recently delivered a judgment which should have a profound influence on the progress of film censorship abolition in many countries. Since 1952 the Court has been gradually whittling down the grounds on which official censorship may be exercised, so that now a film may only be banned if it is obscene; but censorship itself, the need to obtain clearance from a censor before exhibiting a film, was specifically upheld in a test case from Chicago in 1961. Now, in *Freedman v. Maryland*, decided on 1 March 1965, the Court has taken a further big step. A cinema manager in Baltimore exhibited the film *Revenge at Daybreak* without submitting it to the Maryland Board of Censors, and the State, although agreeing that the film was innocuous and would have received a licence if applied for, prosecuted

the exhibitor for failing to submit the film for approval.

The U.S. Supreme Court held the Maryland censorship statute unconstitutional, saying that although censorship as such was permissible (the 1961 decision) this was only so if certain procedural safeguards were followed to protect all those films which were not obscene from the expense of appeals and delays. Consequently, the function of the censor is henceforth to be restricted to examining films to determine whether court proceedings should be taken. If he does go to court (i.e. refuse a licence), the procedure leading to a judicial decision should be swift. Unless these two conditions are fulfilled, a film censorship statute will be unconstitutional. Apart from Maryland, only New York, Kansas and Virginia (together with a number of towns) have film censorship, and they will probably all be affected by the new judgment. The end result will be the transfer of control over film content from governmental censorship boards to the ordinary criminal law.

In the same month, at the same time as the British film industry was finally burying FIDO, the French film exhibitors lost their rearguard action in the same battle against television. They had decided to sue Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, claiming that the televising of films which had been made to be shown in cinemas was an act of "unfair competition" and so unlawful, and also that it constituted an abuse of a dominant or monopolistic position and so was in breach of the Common Market Treaty. This argument was thrown out by the Paris court, which in the process neatly turned the tables on the exhibitors by suggesting that the televising of films increased competition in purchasing them and so had the consequence of increasing their production, an end which was eminently desirable.

NEVILLE HUNNINGS

Work in Progress

Great Britain

STANLEY DONEN: *Arabesque*, based on Alex Gordon's espionage thriller *The Cipher*, with Gregory Peck as an Oxford Professor of Oriental Studies and Sophia Loren as a spy. Stanley Donen Enterprises for Universal-International.

BRYAN FORBES: Planning to film a Kingsley Amis novel *The Egyptologists*, with Peter Sellers. Mirisch for United Artists.

NICHOLAS RAY: Completing an adaptation of *The Doctor and the Devils*, the only story written for the screen by Dylan Thomas. Maximilian Schell will probably play the doctor, a pioneer who defied convention to achieve a breakthrough in anatomical research. To be filmed in Yugoslavia.

KAREL REIZ: *A Suitable Case for Treatment*, off-beat comedy, based on David Mercer's television play, about a working class artist who feels an affinity with gorillas. With David Warner, Vanessa Redgrave. Quintra for British Lion.

U.S.A.

SIDNEY LUMET: *The Group*, a screen adaptation by Sidney Buchman (who also produces) of Mary McCarthy's novel about eight women, with location shooting in colour in New York. A Charles K. Feldman presentation for United Artists.

ROBERT MULLIGAN: *Inside Daisy Clover*, based on the Gavin Lambert novel. With Natalie Wood and Christopher Plummer. A Pakula-Mulligan Production for Warners.

REHEARSAL FOR "A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT". KAREL REIZ MIMES A GORILLA ACTION FOR DAVID WARNER.





PABST AND LULU

LOUISE BROOKS IN "ROLLED STOCKINGS" (1927).

FRANK WEDEKIND'S PLAY *Pandora's Box* opens with a prologue. Out of a circus tent steps the Animal Tamer, carrying in his left hand a whip and in his right hand a loaded revolver. "Walk in," he says to the audience, "walk into my menagerie!"

The finest job of casting G. W. Pabst ever did was casting himself as the director, the Animal Tamer of his film adaptation of Wedekind's "tragedy of monsters." Never a sentimental trick did this whip hand permit the actors assembled to play his beasts. The revolver he shot straight into the heart of the audience.

As Wedekind wrote and produced *Pandora's Box*, it had been detested, banned and condemned from the 1890's. It was declared to be "immoral and inartistic." If, at that time when the sacred pleasures of the ruling class were comparatively private, a play exposing them had called out its dogs of law and censorship feeding on the scraps under the banquet table, how much more savage would be the attack upon a film faithful to

by

Louise Brooks

Wedekind's text made in 1928 in Berlin, where the ruling class publicly flaunted its pleasures as a symbol of wealth and power. And since nobody truly knows what a director is doing till he is done, nobody connected with the film dreamed that Pabst was risking commercial failure with the story of an "immoral" prostitute who wasn't crazy about her work, surrounded by the "inartistic" ugliness of raw bestiality.

Only five years earlier the famous Danish actress

Asta Nielsen had condensed Wedekind's play into the moral prostitute film *Loulou*. There was no lesbianism, no incest. Loulou the man-eater devoured her sex victims—Dr. Goll, Schwarz and Schoen—and then dropped dead in an acute attack of indigestion. This kind of film, with Pabst improvements, was what audiences were prepared for. Set upon making their disillusionment inescapable, hoping to avoid even my duplication of the straight bob and bangs Nielsen had worn as Loulou, Mr. Pabst tested me with my hair curled. But after seeing the test he gave up this point and left me with my shiny black helmet, except for one curled sequence on the gambling ship.

Besides daring to film Wedekind's problem of abnormal psychology—"this fatal destiny which is the subject of the tragedy"; besides daring to show the prostitute as the victim; Mr. Pabst went on to the final damning immorality of making his Lulu as "sweetly innocent" as the flowers which adorned her costumes and filled the scenes of the play. "Lulu is not a real character," Wedekind said, "but the personification of primitive sexuality who inspires evil unaware. She plays a purely passive role." In the middle of the prologue, dressed in her boy's costume of Pierrot, she is carried by a stage hand before the Animal Tamer, who tells her, "... Be unaffected,

"PANDORA'S BOX": ALICE ROBERTS, LOUISE BROOKS.



and not pieced out with distorted, artificial folly, even if the critics praise you for it less wholly. And mind—all foolery and making faces, the childish simpleness of vice disgraces."

This was the Lulu, when the film was released, whom the critics praised not less wholly, but not at all. "Louise Brooks cannot act. She does not suffer. She does nothing." So far as they were concerned, Pabst had shot a blank. It was I who was struck down by my failure, although he had done everything possible to protect and strengthen me against this deadly blow. He never again allowed me to be publicly identified with the film after the night during production when we appeared as guests at the opening of an UFA film. Leaving the Gloria Palast, as he hurried me through a crowd of hostile fans, I heard a girl saying something loud and nasty. In the cab I began pounding his knee, insisting, "What did she say? What did she say?" until he translated: "That is the American girl who is playing our German Lulu!"

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In the studio, with that special, ubiquitous sense penetrating minds and walls alike, Mr. Pabst put down all overt acts of contempt. Although I never complained, he substituted another for the assistant who woke me out of my dressing-room naps, beating the door, bellowing, "Fräulein Brooks! Come!" The subtler forms of my humiliation he assuaged with his own indifference to human regard. Using his strength I learned to block off painful impressions. Sitting on the set day after day, my darling maid Josephine, who had worked for Asta Nielsen and thought she was the greatest actress in the world, came to love me tenderly because I was the world's worst actress. For the same reason, the great actor Fritz Kortner never spoke to me at all. He, like everybody else on the production, thought I had cast some blinding spell over Mr. Pabst which allowed me to walk through my part. To them it was a sorry outcome of Pabst's search for Lulu, about which one of his assistants, Paul Falkenberg, said in 1955: "Preparation for *Pandora's Box* was quite a saga, because Pabst couldn't find a Lulu. He wasn't satisfied with any actress at hand and for months everybody connected with the production went around looking for a Lulu. I talked to girls on the street, on the subway, in railway stations—'Would you mind coming up to our office? I would like to present you to Mr. Pabst.' He looked all of them over dutifully and turned them all down. And eventually he picked Louise Brooks."

How Pabst determined that I was his unaffected Lulu with the childish simpleness of vice was part of the mysterious alliance that seemed to exist between us even before we met. He knew nothing more of me than an unimportant part he saw me play in the Howard Hawks film *A Girl in Every Port*. I had never heard of him, and knew nothing of his unsuccessful negotiations to borrow me from Paramount until I was called to the front office on the option day of my contract. Ben Schulberg told me that I could stay on at my old salary or quit. It was the time of the switch-over to talkies and studios were cutting actors' salaries just for the hell of it. And, just for the hell of it, I quit. Then he told me about the Pabst offer, which I was now free to accept. I said I would accept it and he sent off a cable to Pabst. All this took about ten minutes and left Schulberg somewhat dazed by my composure and quick decision.

But if I had not acted at once I would have lost the part of Lulu. At that very hour in Berlin Marlene Dietrich was waiting with Pabst in his office. "Dietrich was too old and too obvious—one sexy look and the picture would become a burlesque. But I gave her a deadline and the contract was about to be signed when Paramount cabled saying I could have Louise Brooks." It must be remembered that Pabst was speaking about the pre-von Sternberg Dietrich. She was the Dietrich of *I Kiss Your Hand, Madame*, a film in which,



"PANDORA'S BOX", BACK STAGE IN THE THEATRE SEQUENCE: MISS BROOKS, HER MAID AND THE MAKE UP MAN.

caparisoned variously in beads, brocade, ostrich feathers, chiffon ruffles and white rabbit fur, she galloped from one lascivious stare to another. Years after another trick of fate had made her a top star—for Sternberg's biographer Herman Weinberg told me that it was only because Brigitte Helm was not available that he looked further and found Dietrich for *The Blue Angel*—to Travis Banton, the Paramount dress designer who transformed her spangles and feathers into glittering, shadowed beauty, she said: "Imagine Pabst choosing Louise Brooks for Lulu when he could have had me!"

So it is that my playing of the tragic Lulu with no sense of sin remains generally unacceptable to this day. Three years ago, after seeing *Pandora's Box* at Eastman House, a priest said to me, "How did you feel? playing—that girl!" "Feel? I felt fine! It all seemed perfectly normal to me." Seeing him start with distaste and disbelief, and unwilling to be mistaken for one of those women who like to shock priests with sensational confessions, I went on to prove the truth of Lulu's world by my own experience in the 1925 *Follies*, when my best friend was a lesbian and I knew two millionaire publishers, much like Schoen in the film, who backed shows to keep themselves well supplied with Lulus. But the priest rejected my reality exactly as Berlin had rejected its reality when we made *Lulu* and sex was the business of the town.

At the Eden Hotel where I lived the café bar was lined with the better priced trollops. The economy girls walked the street outside. On the corner stood the girls in boots advertising flagellation. Actors' agents pimped for the ladies in luxury apartments in the Bavarian Quarter. Racetrack touts at the Hoppegarten arranged orgies for groups of sportsmen. The

night club Eldorado displayed an enticing line of homosexuals dressed as women. At the Maly there was a choice of feminine or collar-and-tie lesbians. Collective lust roared unashamed at the theatre. In the revue *Chocolate Kiddies*, when Josephine Baker appeared naked except for a girdle of bananas, it was precisely as Lulu's stage entrance was described. "They rage there as in a menagerie when the meat appears at the cage."

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I revered Pabst for his truthful picture of this world of pleasure which let me play Lulu naturally. The rest of the cast were tempted to rebellion. And perhaps that was his most brilliant directorial achievement—getting a group of actors to play characters without "sympathy", whose only motivation was sexual gratification. Fritz Kortner as Schoen wanted to be the victim. Franz Lederer as the incestuous son Alva Schoen wanted to be adorable. Carl Goetz wanted to get laughs playing the old pimp Schigolch. Alice Roberts, the Belgian actress who played the screen's first lesbian, the Countess Geschwitz, was prepared to go no farther than repression in mannish suits.

Her first day's work was in the wedding sequence. She came on the set looking chic in her Paris evening dress and aristocratically self-possessed. Then Mr. Pabst began explaining the action of the scene in which she was to dance the tango with me. Suddenly she understood that she was to touch, to embrace, to make love to another woman. Her blue eyes bulged and her hands trembled. Anticipating the moment of explosion, Mr. Pabst, who proscribed unscripted emotional outbursts, caught her arm and sped her away out of sight

behind the set. A half hour later when they returned, he was hissing soothingly to her in French and she was smiling like the star of the picture . . . which she was in all her scenes with me. I was just there obstructing the view. In both two-shots and her close-ups photographed over my shoulder she cheated her look past me to Mr. Pabst making love to her off camera. Out of the funny complexity of this design Mr. Pabst extracted his tense portrait of sterile lesbian passion and Madame Roberts satisfactorily preserved her reputation. At the time, her conduct struck me as silly. The fact that the public could believe an actress's private life to be like one role in one film did not come home to me till last year when I was visited by a French boy. Explaining why the young people in Paris loved *Lulu*, he put an uneasy thought in my mind. "You talk as if I were a lesbian in real life," I said. "But of course!" he answered in a way that made me laugh to realise I had been living in cinematic perversion for thirty-five years.

Pabst was a short man, broad shouldered and thick chested, looking heavy and wilful in repose. But in action his legs carried him on wings which matched the swiftness of his mind. He always came on the set, fresh as a March wind, going directly to the camera to check the set-up, after which he turned to his cameraman Guenther Krampf, who was the only person on the film to whom he gave a complete account of the scene's action and meaning. Never conducting group discussions with his actors, he then took each separately to be told what he must know about the scene. To Pabst, the carry-over of the acting technique of the theatre, which froze in advance every word, every move, every emotion, was death to realism in films. He wanted the shocks of life which released unpredictable emotions. Proust wrote: "Our life is at every moment before us like a stranger in the night, and which of us knows what point he will reach on the morrow?" To prevent actors from plotting every point they would make on the morrow, Pabst never quite shot the scenes they prepared for.

On the day we shot Lulu's murder of Schoen, Fritz Kortner came on the set with his death worked out to the last facial contortion; with even his blood, the chocolate syrup which would ooze from his mouth, carefully tested for sweetness lest it might surprise an unrehearsed reaction. Death scenes are dearer than life to the actor, and Kortner's, spectacularly

coloured with years of theatrical dying, went unquestioned during rehearsal. Pabst left it to the mechanics of each shot to alter Kortner's performance. The smoke from the firing of the revolver became of first importance, or the exact moment when Kortner pulled my dress off my shoulder, or the photographic consistency of the chocolate syrup—all such technical irritations broke a series of prepared emotions into unhinged fragments of reality.

Dialogue was set by Pabst while he watched the actors during rehearsal. In an effort to be funny, old actors and directors have spread the false belief that any clownish thing coming to mind could be said in front of the camera in silent films. They forget the title writer had to match his work to the actors' speech. I remember late one night wandering into Ralph Spence's suite in the Beverly Wilshire, where he sat gloomily amidst cans of film, cartons of stale Chinese food and empty whisky bottles. He was trying to fix up an unfunny Beery and Hatton comedy and no comic line he invented would fit the lip action. Silent film fans were excellent lip readers and often complained at the box-office about the cowboy cussing furiously trying to mount his horse. Besides which, directors like Pabst used exact dialogue to isolate and intensify an emotion. When Lulu was looking down at the dead Schoen, he gave me the line, "Das Blut!" Not the murder of my husband but the sight of the blood determined the expression on my face.

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That I was a dancer, and Pabst essentially a choreographer in his direction, came as a wonderful surprise to both of us on the first day of shooting *Pandora's Box*. The expensive English translation of the script which I had thrown unopened on the floor by my chair, had already been retrieved by an outraged assistant and banished with Mr. Pabst's laughter. Consequently I did not know that Lulu was a professional dancer trained in Paris—"Gipsy, oriental, skirt dance", or that dancing was her mode of expression—"In my despair I dance the Can-Can!" On the afternoon of that first day Pabst said to me, "In this scene Schigolch rehearses you in a dance number." After marking out a small space and giving me a fast tempo, he looked at me curiously. "You can make up some little steps here—can't you?" I nodded yes and he walked away. It was a typical instance of his care in protecting actors against the blight of failure. If I had been able to do nothing more than the skippity-hops of Asta Nielsen his curious look would never have been amplified to regret, although the intensity of his concern was revealed by his delight when the scene was finished. As I was leaving the set he caught me in his arms, shaking me and laughing as if I had played a joke on him. "But you are a professional dancer!" It was the moment when he realised all his intuitions about me were right. He felt as if he had created me. I was his Lulu! The bouquet of roses he gave me on my arrival at the Station am Zoo was my first and last experience of the deference he applied to the other actors. From that moment I was firmly put through my tricks with no fish thrown in for a good performance.

Four days later I was less wonderfully surprised when he also subjected my private life to his direction. His delight in Lulu's character belonged exclusively to the film. Off the screen my dancing days came to an end when a friend of mine from Washington, with whom I had been investigating Berlin's night life till three every morning, left for Paris. On the set the next day I had just accepted an invitation to an "Artists' Ball—Wow!" when Mr. Pabst's quiet, penetrating voice sounded behind me. "Pretzfelder! Loucees does not go out any more at night." Pretzfelder melted away as I began to howl in protest, "But Mr. Pabst, I have always gone out at night when I worked! I can catch up on my sleep between

WITH FRANZ LEDERER IN "PANDORA'S BOX".





LEFT: WELCOME TO BERLIN, 1928. PABST (IN SPECTACLES) IS TO THE RIGHT OF MISS BROOKS. RIGHT: LOUISE BROOKS, 1964.

scenes here at the studio. I always have!" He didn't hear me because he was busy laying down the law to Josephine, who thereafter, when the day's work was done, returned his Eve to the Eden where I was bathed, fed and put to bed till called for next morning at seven. Cross and restless, I was left to fall asleep listening to the complaints of the other poor caged beasts across Stresemann-Strasse in the Zoologischer Garten.

In the matter of my costumes for the picture I put up a better fight, although I never won a decision. My best punches fanned the air because Pabst had always slipped into another position. Arriving in Berlin on Sunday and starting the picture on the following Wednesday, I found he had selected my first costume, leaving me nothing to do but stand still for a final fitting. This I let pass as an expedient, never suspecting it would be the same with everything else I put on or took off, from an ermine coat to my girdle. Not only was it unheard of to allow an actress no part in choosing her clothes, but I had also been disgustingly spoiled by my directors at Paramount. I had played a manicurist in 500 dollar beaded evening dresses; a salesgirl in 300 dollar black satin afternoon dresses; and a schoolgirl in 250 dollar tailored suits. (It tickles me today when people see these old pictures and wonder why I look so well and the other girls such frumps.)

With this gross over-confidence in my rights and power, I defied Mr. Pabst at first with arrogance. The morning of the sequence in which I was to go from my bath into a love scene with Franz Lederer, I came on the set wrapped in a gorgeous negligée of painted yellow silk. Carrying the peignoir I refused to wear, Josephine approached Mr. Pabst to receive the lash. Hers was the responsibility for seeing that I obeyed his orders, and he answered her excuses with a stern rebuke. Then he turned to me. "Loueees, you must wear the peignoir!" "Why? I hate that big old woolly white bathrobe!" "Because," he said, "the audience must know you are naked beneath it." Stunned by such a reasonable argument, without another word I retired with Josephine to the bathroom set and changed into the peignoir.

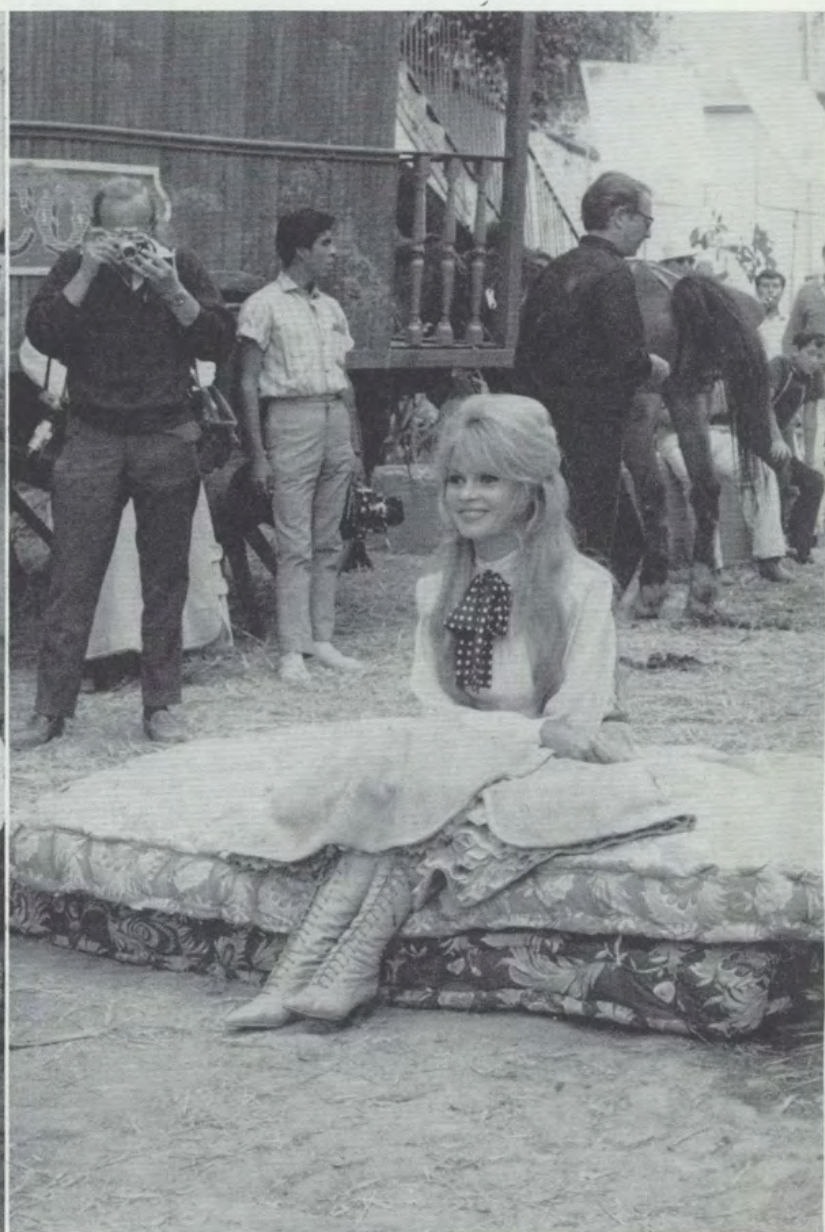
Not to be trapped in this manner again, when I objected to the train of my wedding dress being "tied on like an apron" and he explained that it had to be easily discarded because I could not play a long, frantic sequence tripping over my train, I answered that I did not give a damn, tore off the train and

went into an elaborate tantrum. The worst audience I ever had, Mr. Pabst instructed the dress designer to have the pieces sewn together again and left the fitting room. My final defeat, crying real tears, came at the end of the picture when he went through my trunks to select a dress to be "aged" for Lulu's murder as a streetwalker in the arms of Jack the Ripper. With his instinctive understanding of my tastes, he decided on the blouse and skirt of my very favourite suit. I was anguished. "Why can't you *buy* some cheap little dress to be ruined? Why does it have to be *my* dress?" To these questions I got no answer till the next morning, when my once lovely clothes were returned to me in the studio dressing-room. They were torn and foul with grease stains. Not some indifferent rags from the wardrobe department, but my own suit which only last Sunday I had worn to lunch at the Adlon! Josephine hooked up my skirt, I slipped the blouse over my head and went on the set feeling as hopelessly defiled as my clothes.

Dancing for two years with Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn had taught me much about the magic worked with authentic costuming. Their most popular duet, *Tillers of the Soil*, was costumed in potato sacking. In her *Flower Arrangement*, Miss Ruth's magnificent Japanese robes did most of the dancing. But the next three years of uncontrolled extravagance in films had so corrupted my judgment that I did not realise until I saw *Pandora's Box* in 1956 how marvellously Mr. Pabst's perfect costume sense symbolised Lulu's character and her destruction. There is not a single spot of blood on the pure white bridal satin in which she kills her husband. Making love to her wearing the clean white peignoir, Alva asks, "Do you love me, Lulu?" "I? Never a soul!" It is in the worn and filthy garments of the streetwalker that she feels passion for the first time—comes to life so that she may die. When she picks up Jack the Ripper on the foggy London street and he tells her he has no money to pay her, she says, "Never mind, I like you." It is Christmas Eve and she is about to receive the gift which has been her dream since childhood. Death by a sexual maniac.

A complete checklist of Louise Brooks' films, compiled for us by Miss Brooks herself, is published simultaneously with this article in the July issue of THE MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN.

VIVA MARIA



Bardot and Moreau in Mexico for Louis Malle's 'frivolous, outdoor, show-business film', which he set up primarily for the pleasure of bringing the two ladies together. They play Maria I and Maria II, respectively a travelling chanteuse and the daughter of an Irish terrorist, who end up at the head of a revolution in the intervals of performing strip-tease acts. The Eastman Colour camerawork is by Henri Decaë.



Penelope Houston

PRESTON STURGES

AT LONG LAST, the films of Preston Sturges are out of cold storage. BBC Television has acquired most of the best (though not, for some reason, the matchlessly insouciant *Miracle of Morgan's Creek*). Through the cooperation of the BBC and the copyright owners, the National Film Theatre mounted a Sturges season earlier this year. It would be an exaggeration to say that nobody came. Towards the end, word of mouth had done its usual work, and the audiences were at least respectable. One realised, however, that for all sorts of people Sturges had simply ceased to be one of the names that count. He died in 1959; he had directed only twelve films, eight of them during five intensely active years between 1940-1944. Yet the idea that his films should be in any need of rediscovery seems quite ludicrous: they are so dazzlingly, unequivocally there.

Seeing the films again was like resuming a conversation broken off a decade or more ago. They hadn't dated at all, except for the clothes, and they hadn't acquired any of the classic's patina of respectability. The years had done nothing to make them more suitable for the textbooks. They were still just as proudly rumbustious, noisy, casual, bursting with intelligence and energy, as though their creator hadn't died six years ago but had just strolled out of the projection room for a few minutes, to think up a new situation in which Franklin Pangborn could register the agonised despair of a shopwalker surrounded by kleptomaniacs, or William Demarest the growing mania of the one sane man who realises that all the rest are mad.

"HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO".



Sturges was one of those perversely talented people (John Huston is perhaps another) who achieve a kind of total professionalism, while at the same time contriving to suggest that their films have been tossed off more or less between drinks. He wrote some fifteen scripts during the Thirties, and finally persuaded Paramount to let him direct one of them (*The Great McGinty*, 1940) by offering it to the studio for a nominal ten dollars provided he could make it himself. He won an Oscar for it, and Paramount soon realised that they had a phenomenon on their hands and were producing awed and slightly nervous studio handouts about the man who "writes everything he directs." During the five productive years at Paramount he could do no wrong; which may be slightly more of a tribute than it seemed at the time to the solidarity of a major studio in its heyday. After 1944, certainly, nothing was quite the same. A partnership with Howard Hughes produced *Mad Wednesday*, with Harold Lloyd. He directed *Unfaithfully Yours*, a comedy which was nearly brilliant but not quite Sturges; then the less exhilarating *The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend*. There was a long silence, and then in 1955 came *The Diaries of Major Thompson*, with Jack Buchanan as an Englishman in Paris. It was Sturges' last film, and it was sadly, defiantly unfunny, as though somewhere along the line the mainspring of that perfect comedy timing had snapped.

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He must be one of the few film-makers ever to have been publicly psychoanalysed by a critic. The critic was James Agee, who wrote of Sturges with a kind of nagging, apprehensive affection, generous towards his talent but continually disturbed by his apparent lack of conscience. Sturges had had a quite extraordinary childhood, with a mother who sent him to school in Chicago dressed in a Greek tunic, and later dragged him on resolutely cultural jaunts around Europe. When Preston was sixteen, she installed him as manager of the Deauville branch of her cosmetics business. Sturges, a passionate gadgeteer who is also credited with inventions ranging from a library filing system to a vertical flight aircraft, is said to have rewarded her by devising the first kiss-proof lipstick. The much-married mother (Sturges took the surname of one of his stepfathers, an amiable Chicago businessman) liked to claim descent from the d'Estes and started her business, the Maison Desti, to market a face cream which reached her by way of another husband, the son of the Turkish court doctor. None of it sounds probable; apparently it all happened. Rather later in her career, she lent Isadora Duncan the scarf which, wound too casually, got caught up in a car wheel and snapped back to break the dancer's neck.

Agee's theory was that out of all this Sturges developed "a permanently incurable loathing for anything that stank of 'culture'" and "an all but desperate respect and hunger for success which . . . again assumed the dimensions of a complex." Of the films Agee wrote: "They seem to me wonderfully, uncontrollably, almost proudly corrupt, vengeful, fearful of intactness and self-commitment . . . their mastering object, aside from success, seems to be to sail as steep into the wind as possible without for an instant incurring the disaster of becoming seriously, wholly acceptable as art. They seem . . . the elaborately counterpointed image of a neurosis." This was in *The Nation*. Writing less analytically in *Time*, Agee risked one of the more idiotic speculations that can ever have been made by a great critic: "It remains to be seen what Sturges might do with really major material, such as *Seven Against Thebes* or the Oberammergau Players."

Happily, we never found out. This extraordinary suggestion apart, however, it isn't too difficult to understand the nature of Agee's concern. Part of Sturges' wayward brilliance lay in an eel-like ability to wriggle out of any tight corner ever set him by a picture. He appears to have allowed a plot to handcuff him and tie him down; he appears to have reached the moment when he must reward Agee by turning serious. And then there's a great convulsion, and Houdini/Sturges is free again. Like Hitchcock, the other great showman, he seems to have felt total confidence in his ability to manipulate

an audience, together with a small, genial contempt for the people who allowed him to run such rings round them.

The last reels of Sturges' pictures add up to a whole series of spectacular volte-faces, always designed to reward the characters on their own terms. *Palm Beach Story*, for instance, is a romantic comedy about a wife (Claudette Colbert) on the run from her loving husband. On the train to Florida, she encounters, by stepping firmly on his face, one of the most engaging characters Sturges ever invented. This is Hackensacker III (Rudy Vallee), a wistful, melancholy multi-millionaire, whose generous impulses are always being curbed by some vestigial family instinct for keeping a watch on his small change. His days are spent in recording (but not adding up: that would be pointless) his tips and taxi-fares in a little notebook. While Miss Colbert looks greedily on, he gravely weighs up the merits of the 50 cent or the 75 cent breakfast. Peering out from behind the towering barricades of his money, he sadly notes "One of the tragedies of this life: that the men who are most in need of a beating are always enormous." Sturges uses him cruelly. Hackensacker's serenading of the heroine, with full orchestra stationed in the garden, is the occasion for her romantic reconciliation with her husband. But the last sequence relents. Wife and husband produce an identical twin sister and brother (one for Hackensacker; one for his sister, Mary Astor), so that everyone gets what they think they want.

What so exasperated Agee was Sturges' extension of this gay opportunism into more serious areas. The supremely equivocal ending of *Hail the Conquering Hero* is a case in point. Here, at the height of the war, Sturges had the temerity to question such things as mother love, the U.S. Marines, and the nervous respect paid by civilians to the returning combat veteran. The leading character is Woodrow Truesmith, son of a first war hero, and brought up to venerate the Marines above all else. When he is discharged from the Corps because of hay fever, he is so scared of telling his mother that he takes a job in a shipyard and pretends to be on overseas service. Six Marines, one of them suffering from the most pronounced mother complex on record, befriend Woodrow and take him home. Hideously, they find that the town has laid on a hero's welcome, with Franklin Pangborn in distracted command of four competing bands. Worse still, the solid citizens insist on drafting Woodrow as their candidate for mayor. His final embarrassed confession brings the town down on his heels like a lynch mob. But they only *look* like a lynch mob: in fact they love him more than ever, and deliriously acclaim their truthful mayor.

This ending has been interpreted as a really catastrophic sell-out, with Mother and the Marines triumphant, simple honesty vindicated, and hardly a dry eye in the house. Or, equally validly, since the scenes are shot both with and against the grain of their content, it has been seen as an expression of a basic contempt. There is no pretence that a town which would elect poor, blundering Woodrow is anything but out of its mind; and consequently this is only a happy ending if you think it is. Woodrow certainly thinks so, and Sturges enjoys rewarding his heroes far beyond their just deserts, but up to the level of their dreams. His films fade out into a series of Cheshire cat grins: not the expression on the face of the work "wholly acceptable as art."

Agee thought that Sturges' childhood had a lot to answer for. But if one feels like following him in this risky attempt to explain an artist in terms of his upbringing, one might find other and more sympathetic clues. Sturges was born in 1898, and he got all this European education, and the detested museum tours, between about 1906 and 1914. It becomes tempting, in the light of these dates, to see it all as one of those great Jamesian expeditions, with the innocents setting sail from Chicago to bring home the cultural loot of the old world. Take it a little further back in time, and you have the perfect image: Preston in his Greek tunic matched against the bored little boy in *Daisy Miller* who says so crossly, "My father ain't in Europe; he's in a better place than Europe"—Schenectady, not Heaven.

In any case, several things do seem to stand out from Sturges' films. Although only two of them (those starring



"PALM BEACH STORY": THE ALE AND QUAIL CLUB.

Eddie Bracken) are actually set in the classic American small town, one's overriding impression is of this genial, comfortable, more than slightly ridiculous small town world. In *Sullivan's Travels*, he even made Hollywood look conspicuously more run down and homely than one usually sees it. Partly this may be due to his company of small part actors, who all seem to know each other so well, and to make such allowances for each others' quirks, that they travel from film to film like a collection of indulgent, gossiping neighbours. But the Sturges town itself belongs to some period much earlier than the 1940's: it is like some childhood recollection brought hazily to life on the Paramount lot, as though in his ideas of America Sturges had somehow skipped a generation.

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Paradoxically, it is this time-lag, this feeling that Griffith's idyllic Americana has somehow got cluttered up with juke-boxes, lunch-counters, Forties hair styles and the U.S. Marines, that makes Sturges' films seem so dateless now. Eddie Bracken, the tormented innocent of *Hail the Conquering Hero* and *Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, is more naïve than any Forties character had any conceivable right to be; but he is, in his wistful determination to do the right thing, very like someone out of a silent comedy. Even Sturges' language, with its mixture of slang, repetitions, gibbering hesitations, and entirely formal turns of speech, is quite timeless. Above all the racket of a Sturges film, voices can be heard talking in the relaxed, balanced aphorisms of the classic English stage comedy. "Let us be crooked but never common," is the motto of the con man in *The Lady Eve*. "Chivalry is not only dead; it is decomposed," laments Hackensacker III. "Rich people, and theorists are usually rich people, think of poverty only in the negative," says the Wildean butler of *Sullivan's Travels*. "The poor know all about poverty, and only the morbid rich would find it glamorous."

It is this timelessness which seems to me to give his films their free-wheeling assurance and their conjuror's freedom of action. The links with reality are deliberately kept tenuous. Take, for instance, *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*. The film's heroine, Gertrude Kockenlocker (Betty Hutton) is the volatile daughter of the local policeman, who contrives during one night to meet, marry, become pregnant by, and irrevocably mislay a soldier about whom she remembers only that his name may be something like Ratsky-Watsky. (Only in a Sturges film could one find a family named Kockenlocker gravely debating whether someone else could possibly be called Ratsky-Watsky.) Norval Jones (Eddie Bracken), already pining for the military glory that eludes him in *Hail the Conquering Hero*, is summoned to the rescue. Dressed in a borrowed 1914 uniform, like some lunatic fugitive from *Shoulder Arms*, he gallantly sets out to provide Trudy with a marriage licence in the name of Ratsky-Watsky. Arrest; wild

confusion; wonderfully funny mock jail-break, with constable Kockenlocker (William Demarest) doing everything but order Norval out of his jail, Norval refusing to see that he is being invited to escape, and the two Kockenlocker daughters arriving with their own rescue equipment, in the form of ropes and spades. Then comes one of Sturges' sentimental interludes, with Kockenlocker banging crossly away at a Christmas tree star but pausing to remind Trudy, very seriously, of the stable in Bethlehem. And then the pandemonium of the ending, with Trudy producing sextuplets, bedlam let loose in the hospital, and headlines ("Canada Protests", "Hitler Demands Re-count") flashing on and off.

The "miracle" makes everyone happy: it is frantic, absurd and rather touching, and it allows Sturges to play his favourite trick of flinging a film into such total chaos, as though all the characters were being swept off their feet by a tidal wave, that he can get away with practically anything. In *Miracle of Morgan's Creek* he employs most, if not quite all, his range of moods; and each of them remains valid for precisely as long as it lasts on the screen. Scenes between Norval and Trudy, mostly played out in wistful or irate dialogues as they walk through the classic small town streets, with the neighbours perched watchfully on their porches, have a genuine tenderness. The wedding sequence, with the justice of the peace (Porter Hall) roused from sleep to stumble peevishly through the ceremony, while his beaming wife stands by in her dressing-gown, is sad and foolish, toppling over into absurdity when Porter Hall whips out an ancient blunderbuss. In the middle of all this is the rock-solid figure of William Demarest, a gallant Puritan who doesn't see why his daughter should want to go out with soldiers, and who insists on standing no nonsense until nonsense overwhelms him.

By the end, nobody on or off screen is encouraged to remember that Norval is not the father of the sextuplets, and that this final masquerade is the most painfully ludicrous of any he has been asked to endure. This, too, is characteristic: if there is one consistent element running through Sturges' films, it is a view of life as some gigantic game of false pretences. In his first film, *The Great McGinty* (originally written seven years before he filmed it), the hero is a tramp (Brian Donlevy) who ingratiates himself with the boss of a political machine by voting some forty times, at two dollars a time, in a local election. Under the boss's patronage he finally achieves the Governor's mansion. Marriage to a charming prig, however, has undermined him, and it is the rogue's attempt to play the honest man that brings about his downfall. In *Christmas in July* (also 1940), a young clerk is tricked into believing that he has won \$25,000 in a coffee company's slogan competition. (His terrible slogan—"If you can't sleep, it isn't the coffee, it's the bunk"—is repeated so insistently, and in so many contexts, that it acquires all the maddening force of an incantation.) This supposed success changes his life: he becomes the sort of man who wins \$25,000. And the Sturges twist, after the trick has been revealed and he is left in the debris of his imaginary fortune, is that he wins the contest after all.

* * *

Right you are if *they* think you are: that is the fairly explicit point of all these masquerades. A tramp becomes state governor; a booby is elected mayor; a clerk emerges from anonymity to an office with his name on the door; a girl's life changes (in *Easy Living*, one of the Thirties scripts) when she acquires a fur coat and finds everyone expecting her to live up to it. Likeable buffoons are whirled into fantastic impostures, go through them in a state of quaking terror, and usually come out on top. But Sturges, unlike Capra, never uses his barnstorming finales as a means of suggesting that guileless virtue may defeat entrenched corruption. In his films, the victory is more likely to go to plain human silliness and gullibility; and that presumably is what a good liberal like James Agee couldn't stand. In one biting comment he called Sturges a coward, a snob and a cynic. But you can't accuse a man of lacking the courage of his convictions, when his main conviction would seem to have been that in this game of deception anyone can win.

In the best critical article I know on Sturges (*Film Culture*, Fall 1962) Manny Farber and W. S. Poster comment that: "The first impression one gets from a Sturges movie is that of the inside of a Ford assembly line smashed together and operating during a total war crisis." This very American comparison comes in the context of an article which sees Sturges' work as "an extreme embodiment of the American success dream" and analyses his suspect cynicism as "the highly self-conscious philosophy of the hack." It makes a useful antidote to Agee's reproaches, and a more sophisticated approach to the problem of coping with Sturges' equivocations. As for the speed and confusion that make up the surface of a Sturges film, I would choose a more European comparison. To me the impression is rather of an old-fashioned coach business adapting itself in a flurry of urgent incompetence to the demands of the motor car, while a collection of cross-grained Dickensian minor characters stand grumbling in corners, convinced that no good will come of anything if they haven't personally approved it.

Never less than middle-aged, sometimes seeming almost dangerously advanced into senility, the members of the Sturges stock company show a marvellous capacity to stand the pace, like so many Edwardian grandfathers dancing their juniors into the ground. There is Raymond Walburn, the proud embodiment of inane gravity, forever rehearsing his acceptance speech as mayor, or realising with horror that he has just given away \$25,000 to a total stranger; little Jimmy Conlin, the tiny, spectacled old man, usually bouncing between two larger figures, like a highland terrier warding off two Alsatians; Robert Greig, the butler frozen in eternal disapproval of his delinquent employers; Franklin Pangborn, of the despairing gestures and the prim manner; Torben Meyer, glittering of eye and wild of accent; Georgia Caine, beaming mother or flirtatious widow.

Many of them turn up among the members of the Ale and Quail Club, that immortal group of ageing sportsmen encountered by Claudette Colbert in *Palm Beach Story*. With timid gallantry, and a proper show of decorum on both sides, they buy Miss Colbert's train ticket. But the excitement of the occasion overcomes them. Soon the sporting guns are out, the howling dogs are released from the luggage van, and the Negro barman, with an ice bucket over his head and the white towel of surrender in his hand, waves feebly over the top of his bar as the millionaire huntsmen take pot shots through the train window. Chaos rages up and down the train; a posse of Pullman attendants moves in with cries of "Misdemeanour"; and the great American clubmen, still shooting up the night, are abandoned in a railway siding.

Sturges' affection for these rich, battered relics, cast up on the further shores of middle age, is extended to almost all his minor characters. They are old and odd, spry and bumbling, firmly entrenched in their own concerns and—when not reduced to baffled, helpless speechlessness—given to a fierce articulacy. They form an American chorus, standing by while the hero falls over his own feet, gets tangled up in political intrigue, or learns the full horror of the wiles practised on him by the girl he loves.

A press handout for *The Lady Eve* describes in gloating detail what Sturges could do to one of his innocent young men. Henry Fonda in this film "twice trips over Miss Stanwyck's trim legs and knocks down a tray-bearing waiter; falls over a sofa and lands in a platter of hors d'oeuvres; trips and drags box portières (curtains) crashing down on his head; gets a huge hunk of roast beef and gravy dropped into his lap; is drenched with hot coffee; sits down in a mud puddle during a rainstorm; is conked on the head by a falling hatbox; is nuzzled and licked on the neck by a horse . . ." All these things certainly happen, and it wouldn't surprise me if the handout had forgotten one or two more. There are moments when Sturges seems to feel that the only thing funnier than a man falling flat on his face is a man dragging the curtains down with him. Bracken falls; Joel McCrea falls; and Fonda, whose placid love affair with a snake is interrupted by the appearance of Barbara Stanwyck, a cool card-sharper of the Transatlantic liners, falls most often of all. He seems to be forever retreating sadly to change his

clothes, while Miss Stanwyck, masquerading as Lady Eve Sidwich ("I've been English before," she says crossly when asked if she can manage the accent), looks remorselessly on.

If such basic slapstick needs justification, it finds it in the speed of the films. "A Capra, Wilder or Wellman takes half a movie to get a plot to the point where the audience accepts it and it comes to cinematic life. Sturges often accomplished as much in the first two minutes," wrote Manny Farber in the article already quoted. He could even achieve it before the movie starts at all, as in the action that goes on behind the credit titles of *Palm Beach Story*. Here bride and groom hurtle in fantastic disarray towards the altar; a maid keeps fainting dead away at the telephone; and the effect is of action that could sustain the average comedy for a good half-hour compressed into two absurd, lightning minutes. Sturges wasn't a particularly inventive film-maker: he liked to keep a scene in medium two-shot, moving into close-up on key dialogue; his settings did their job, but they seldom strike the eye. But he knew everything about comic timing, and how to play a scene so that the impression is of unfaltering action, a steady flow of bustling, breathless movement which seems to be held just on the point where it threatens to break out of the frame.

The essence of such a film-maker is that he should never be seen to be exerting himself. Lines flash by, half-heard; satirical comment must be caught on the wing; nothing is made too coherent or consistent, so that a heartless charmer like Barbara Stanwyck's Lady Eve can inflict atrocious wounds without the audience quite realising what she is doing or losing their regard for her. There is one film, however, in which Sturges very nearly came out into the open: *Sullivan's Travels*.

* * *

It opens, in Sturges' most allusive and involving style, with a fight between two men on the roof of a speeding train. Almost immediately, up comes an end title. We are in a Hollywood viewing theatre, watching the latest film of a comedy director making a more or less desperate effort to go straight; and the fight, as he angrily explains, is symbolic

"THE LADY EVE". HENRY FONDA AND BARBARA STANWYCK.





VERONICA LAKE IN A STUDIO SCENE FROM "SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS". STURGES ISN'T CREDITED WITH AN APPEARANCE IN THE FILM, BUT THE MAN BEHIND HER LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE HIM.

of Capital versus Labour. Sullivan (Joel McCrea) wants to film a novel called "Brother, Where Art Thou?", while the studio bosses want only a repetition of "Hey, Hey in the Hayloft" or "Ants in Their Pants of 1939". Goaded by their insistence that he doesn't know the meaning of poverty, Sullivan borrows a tramp outfit from the wardrobe department and takes to the road to find out. Behind him, at a barely discreet distance, creeps a vast studio bus, with doctor, chef, secretary, bodyguard and publicity men, all under orders to watch over the great director.

It is a wonderfully succinct opening, as fast and economical as anything Sturges ever achieved, and it leads into a series of absurd adventures, as Sullivan tries vainly to break with Hollywood. Running away from two over-kindly ladies whose liking for having a man about the house verges on the alarming, he gets a lift straight back to his starting point. Here he picks up Veronica Lake, coolest and quietest of the Sturges heroines, as a failed actress who can think of no greater present than an introduction to Lubitsch. "There's nothing like a deep-dish movie for driving you out into the open," she insists, when Sullivan tries to tell her that in a

SULLIVAN (JOEL MCCREA) AT THE CINEMA.



suffering world a director ought not to be making "Ants in Their Pants of 1941". Together they set off to sample poverty, first getting the butler to check with the booking-office where a tramp might properly be expected to board a freight train.

Slowly, Sturges begins to modulate the film's tone. The rich boy's search for the poor no longer seems quite so ludicrous; and it becomes something entirely different when Sullivan is robbed in a freight yard, attacks a railway policeman, and winds up in a Southern chain gang. Again, the point is one of identity—of who other people think you are. Once Sullivan is recognised, he could have hit ten policemen and no one would keep him locked up. In the meantime, however, Sturges has put everything he knows (and a curious everything it is) into the theatrical, fanciful, maddening and effective staging of his key scene. As a treat, the convicts are taken to a film show in a Negro church hall, where the minister instructs his tattered congregation on their welcome to those "less fortunate than we are." Through the mists around the hall, the men advance to a rhythm of clanking chains. Inside, they and the Negroes join in wild laughter at a Disney cartoon. Back in Hollywood, Sullivan confounds his bosses and dismisses "Brother, Where Art Thou?": he now knows that he wants to make people laugh.

As a comedy director's apologia this is notably unconvincing—for the reason that any director who went into comedy with a sense of mission would probably make some terrible movies. And even at its face value, the scene of the laughing convicts has a kind of hysteria, a strained convulsive agony of mirth. Was Sturges here showing us the heart Agee suspected he hadn't got? Or was he simply playing with an idea, and barnstorming it through when it got too hot to handle? Because Sturges was the great equivocator, we never quite trust him. He has trained us to keep up our guard against his own seriousness.

In all its details, *Sullivan's Travels* is beautifully organised. The gossiping studio staff, boxed up in their absurd bus; Sullivan's two butlers, so deeply distrustful of the whole adventure; Veronica Lake, chirping cool jokes from behind that wave of hair; Sullivan's terrible wife, laying flowers on his supposed grave with a gesture of frozen boredom; Jimmy Conlin, the trusty in the labour camp determined to get the recalcitrant Sullivan to the picture show—these are all among Sturges' best inventions. And the feeling of movement, of freight trains trundling through the night, makes this a very specifically American adventure.

When it came to the point, however, Sturges didn't know what to do with the poor. He sentimentalises them, as Sullivan and the girl wander among the down-and-outs, and at the same time he is scared of them. He doesn't want to get too close; and so he falls back on mist, distance and romantic music, with only the publicity cameraman, busily recording Sullivan's progress from a vantage point in a tree, to hold the film in contact with its satiric intention. Faced with something extremely simple to put across—the real thing, as opposed to Sullivan's hopelessly romantic view of it—his machinery of expression simply collapsed under him.

It is a very interesting collapse, because it reveals Sturges face to face with his own limitations. His defences were built up in depth; his favourite approach was the oblique and glancing one, with all the retreats into burlesque left open. His films give the impression of running on sheer, undiluted nervous energy rather than on thought. Confronted with an idea to be followed straight through, Sturges brought his elaborate defence mechanisms into play. Yet for a man who is supposed to have thought only of success, he was extraordinarily preoccupied with the byways of failure, with age and decay, and that wistful realisation of their own uselessness that suddenly hits his most sympathetic characters. His films are sometimes nearly serious, and always wildly funny. Perhaps the key scene in a Sturges movie is really an earlier one in *Sullivan's Travels*, when the director goes to another rural film show. There are the howling babies, the popcorn-chewing children, the snoring farmers, the tired, apathetic, misty faces—and among them the Hollywood aristocrat, dressed in a borrowed suit of clothes, confronting the ultimate object and purpose of it all: the audience.

Letter from Hollywood

COLIN YOUNG

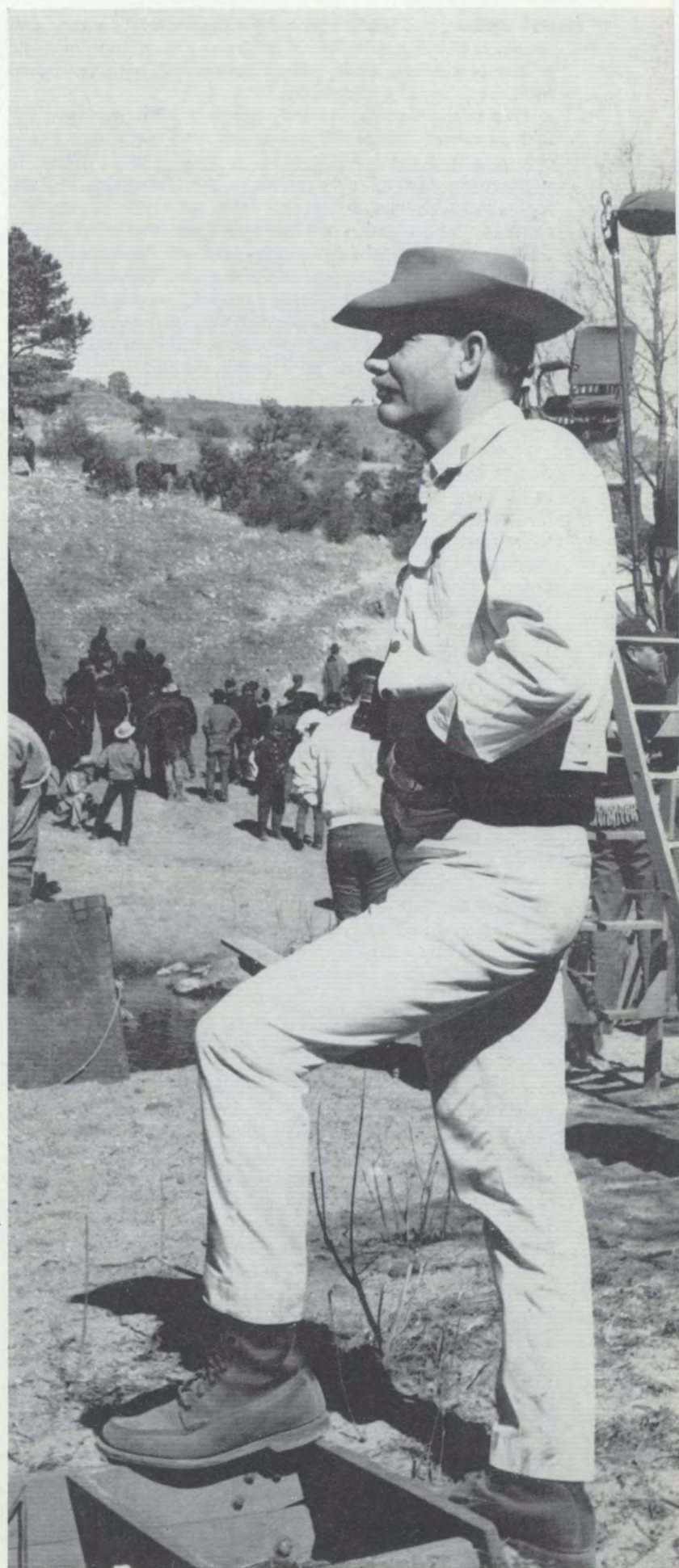
REMEMBER WHEN I FIRST CAME to America I was surprised that most of the rich people who lived in Beverly Hills made their money out of something else besides films. Hollywood, I had expected, was all there really was out here. I wasn't prepared for the oil industry, the aircraft factories, or the real estate tycoons who really control the area. And right at this minute, whatever it is that is happening in Hollywood seems about the least important thing that is happening in the state of California. It is difficult to take its problems seriously when it is turning out tired material that is irrelevant to what is really going on inside Americans.

The Californian students, for instance, are angry at authority, and they show their anger in very direct ways. A UCLA film student, tired of the insulting arrogance of the John Birch Society's campaign to "support your local police" is planning a lapel button (to be sold at civil rights rallies) with the motto: Control Your Local Police. The film-maker to whom he and his colleagues gave the warmest applause recently was Richard Beymer (Anne Frank's boy friend in the Stevens film, and Natalie Wood's friend in *West Side Story*). Last summer Beymer made a film (which cost him \$10,000) recounting his experiences in a Freedom School in the South. Called *A Regular Bouquet*, it is a fairly direct condemnation of white terrorism and a paean of praise for the CORE campaign for voter registration.

This time last year I was looking at the first print of a film called *The Bus*, made with his own money by cameraman Haskell Wexler (*Hoodlum Priest*, *America, America*, *The Best Man* and *The Loved One*). To make it he got on a Freedom Bus in San Francisco, bound for the march on Washington in August of 1963, shooting all the way. There is a wave of social protest in America and in American film-makers that is rarely reflected by Hollywood, although it does get on to network television from time to time. While Philip Leacock has established himself in a rather odd way by becoming the producer of the old TV perennial *Gunsmoke* (where he can give some new directors and writers a chance), his brother Ricky is down in Georgia making a film for the same network (CBS) on the Ku Klux Klan.

But the studios still struggle along with their heads buried deep in the sand. Even the films which are a popular success with the teenage crowd turn out to be a drag. The most obvious example is American-International's *Beach Blanket Bingo*, fifth in a "Beach Party gang" series, and no match at all to the Beatles movie, even if it is filled with pert little bottoms and lots of brown belly buttons peeking out above skimpy bikinis. The girls run around in large groups, squeal

ON LOCATION FOR "MAJOR DUNDEE": SAM PECKINPAH.



and squeak, and shake themselves pathetically to very dull music. Buster Keaton puts in a forlorn appearance, and the grimly bright and shiny young heroes and heroines outdo each other in their gaucheries.

This would not matter very much if BBB were not the fifth in a very successful series, with the sixth, *Ski Party*, complete and the seventh, *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini*, in production. One of my students at the University of California cut a short film together from the trash barrels of a company which makes nudies, and there was more fun in that than in the whole running time of American International's Panavision and Colour feature. There is nothing wrong with aiming at the teenage market, but it is astounding that these films, which are so predominantly square, should be accepted by America's teenagers. Life on California's beaches is not as dull as Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello make it seem.

A more important disappointment is Sam Peckinpah's *Major Dundee*. The critics have slayed it. They take two lines. Some say, snidely, "*Major Dundee* is a minor disaster." Others prefer—"*Major Dundee* is a major disaster." It isn't as bad as that, and they are surely wide of the mark when they blame it all on the director—as *Newsweek* (for example) does. They begin brightly enough: "Think of Yosemite Falls, or suicides from the top of the Empire State Building, or the streaking of meteorites downward toward the earth, and you get some idea of the decline in the career of Sam Peckinpah." After citing the film's faults, the reviewer, with that insight which often marks anonymous American criticism, continues: "None of this is the fault of (Charlton) Heston or producer Jerry Bresler." But he, and all the others who went out happily after the man they had helped build up after *Guns in the Afternoon* (American title: *Ride the High Country*), did not do their homework. I have not done mine entirely, for I have not yet talked with Mr. Bresler, but after seeing the movie I spoke with the director and read the script.

During the writing of the screenplay (which took about a year) Peckinpah and his collaborator, Oscar Saul, were apparently under instructions to prepare for a film which would run about three hours and would be given preferential release (road-shows rather than saturation booking in a double-bill situation). Two days before shooting, or one week into it (Peckinpah cannot remember which), Bresler changed his mind. It was now to come down to two hours (or so) and would be double-billed. Peckinpah shot most of the script, but it would not be surprising if some of the heart went out of it at that moment. What we see (in its multiple run in Los Angeles it is down to less than two hours) is only the bones of what must have been a complex film. Occasionally in the script the action is very sparsely written, while the scene is extended in the shooting (for example, the entrance to the Mexican village, which is very carefully staged, is described in the script in ten words). At other places the bones are all that are left, and sometimes even they are gone. It is a wonder the film even makes sense.

When Peckinpah cut it, the film ran three hours. He brought it down to 2 hours and 40 minutes and decided about ten minutes more should go back in. Instead another thirty were taken out. His version was never previewed (a break in contract). Peckinpah does not seem to object to the breach of contract so much as he questions the motives of a producer who would not preview a 2½ million dollar production. His conclusion is that Bresler (who began as an editor and is a Hollywood veteran) really must prefer the version which was released. But one afternoon recently Peckinpah played the game of imagining how much the picture might be improved by cutting it down even further, so that the shadows of his

intentions are removed altogether and the audience is left with a simplified adventure yarn.

Later, producer Marty Ransohoff (*Americanisation of Emily* and *The Loved One*) fired Peckinpah from *Cincinnati Kid* after a week. He had fired William Wyler from *Emily* after ten days, so this is in the best tradition. Obviously none of this is good for Peckinpah's career. He might have been helped if he could have insisted on the right of preview, but this does not always save a director, as we shall see in a moment. He is now working on an original which Metro has some claim to, but which he may take elsewhere. After that he has another original which Heston and he wish to do together: it does not sound as if the actor is too unhappy with him.

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Another name to bite the dust recently was William Inge, who felt obliged to take his name off a recent Universal release starring Ann-Margret and newcomer Michael Parks. *Bus Riley's Back in Town* was a first feature for Toronto-trained Harvey Hart, who is now licking his wounds and saying philosophically that he still found the experience valuable. Somewhere during the shooting (with the studio seeing all the rushes) Ann-Margret was signed up to a long-term, multi-million dollar contract. And some time later (during the editing) they became worried about her image in the film. Inge had written a group of early scenes to introduce the girl, and Hart had directed them with some bite. All this is taken out in the version released. Somewhere after the previews Hart was disenfranchised, someone on the lot wrote new scenes for the girl (making her more square), and a contract director shot them. It was after this that Inge took off his name, and the film now goes out without a writer's credit.

For some reason the studio ran a newspaper campaign leading up to the release with posters of Ann-Margret which

MICHAEL PARKS AND ANN-MARGRET IN "BUS RILEY'S BACK IN TOWN".



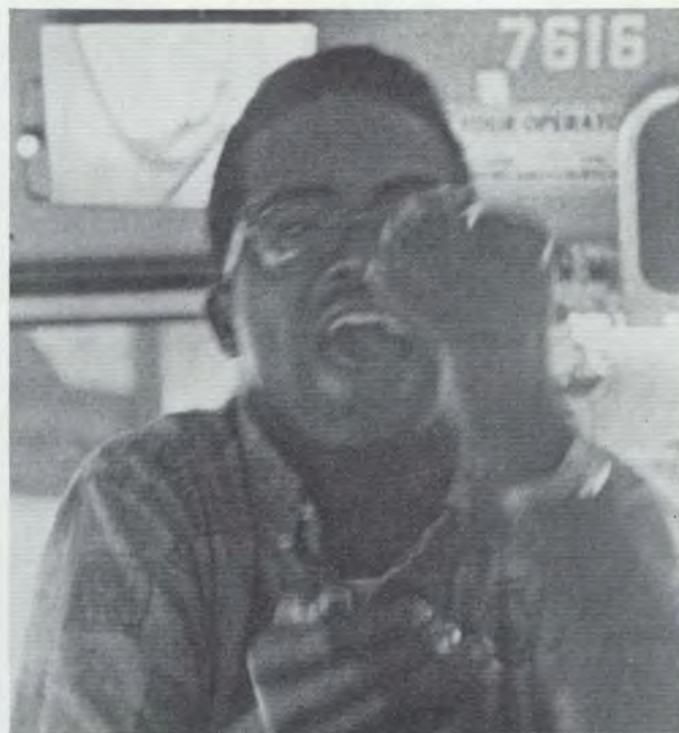
suggested a sex picture. But all we see of her now in the early part of the movie is a pout at her husband (added scene, and shot so that the actor's face is not visible), and a very contrived looking bridge party (with voices off—"Hey! Do you hear Bus Riley's back in town!"), and the camera pans over to Ann-Margret as she licks the ends of her fingers). There are a couple more added scenes, and by the time the two principals come together we wonder what the boy, whom we've taken a liking to, sees in this rather dumb, over-sexed girl.

There's enough limpness left in the rest to suggest that this was not going to be Harvey Hart's best work. But we are also left with questions about Hollywood's method. When he signed on for the picture Hart pointed out that he was used to rehearsal (on CBC in Toronto, he worked mostly on live drama), and was promised a couple of weeks. He was finally given only 2½ days and this, we now see, threw him off balance. But the question remains—with his strong reputation for dramatic shows in Toronto, and this comparative failure on record here—what does the future hold for him here? Peckinpah is in a similar position. Everything depends now on the next picture. They both can pay the bills in television. But when they wish to make their next feature, their own way, will they be able to do so?

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John Cassavetes, after getting into fights with Paramount on *Too Late Blues*, and with Stanley Kramer on *A Child is Waiting*, is now going it alone again on his current project. He is shooting in the style of *Shadows*, on 16mm., working from a script of his own but largely with unprofessional players and often an unprofessional crew, so that a great deal is improvised again. The crew is not paid—they eat out of his "large white icebox" as one of the helpers put it—and there is a great spirit of adventure and derring-do. If the movie works (and he has already shot over 50 hours of film) it will be a great victory against the system. Not against the unions—because that is really a separate matter, and I am sure is not any particular target for Cassavetes—but against the studios and their practice of packaging, in which story, director, stars and budget are all neatly tied together before a distributor is interested. The independent film-maker must be an entrepreneur, and that is a very special business in the United States. If there is a shortage of scripts there also seems to be a shortage of producers who can go out and raise the money for low-budget features. If you cannot package, the banks more or less tell you: Don't bother us.

Curtis Harrington, to keep his hand in more than anything else, has almost completed a 10-day science fiction movie, *Planet of Blood*, for American-International, with Basil Rathbone, John Saxon and Dennis Hopper (who had the lead in Harrington's last feature). Earlier he had tried to put together a Western with Ethel Waters, but that fell through. At one point it was to be a Spanish co-production with Anita Ekberg. "Perhaps just as well that didn't come off," he said recently. And meanwhile he, like many other younger directors, has been filling assignments for George Stevens Jr.'s USIA unit. Harrington has done one called *Images of Productivity*; Terry Sanders did one on the Republican and Democratic Conventions (*Conventions 1964*) and is now doing one on peace. His brother Denis has done one for the TV branch of USIA and is now doing one on Adlai Stevenson. Kent Mackenzie got an assignment; James Blue did the very successful film on the civil rights demonstration in Washington—*The March*. But whenever these film-makers get close to controversy their work is liable to be shelved. A young UCLA film-maker, Donald Wrye, made three films in



HASKELL WEXLER'S "THE BUS".

Colombia, the last of which has to be substantially changed before the Agency can accept it. Then he was offered the position of heading the USIA film unit in Saigon. He has chosen to resign. This must pain George Stevens Jr., who seems genuinely to wish to build up some kind of a standard.

Elsewhere, the first and only state film board in the United States, the one in North Carolina, headed by former National Film Board and Shell of India man James Beveridge, was voted out of existence this year after the election of a conservative governor. The Universities are providing a temporary haven for some film-makers. Next year Stanford is having George Stoney, while UCLA currently has Terence Macartney-Filgate and Josef von Sternberg, and had James Blue teaching last year, preceded, of course, by Cavalcanti, Renoir and Basil Wright.

American film students must be making about 200 short films a year (about half of them at UCLA) and some of them are getting out into public view. Eventually they must have an influence on the shape of American film-making, but at present there is still more noise being made by the New York "school", indefatigably led by Jonas Mekas, when he is not too busy fighting censorship laws in the city courts. Kenneth Anger, now established in San Francisco, said recently in an interview that, despite his nostalgia for the old Hollywood of the musicals and the "B" pictures and the serials, he now thought that Hollywood should be dismantled. There is scarcely any sign that it will be, but while it survives some nice things are portending. Harold Hecht's production of *Cat Ballou* (with Jane Fonda and Lee Marvin) has been getting some underground swell. Gavin Lambert's *Inside Daisy Clover* is being produced by the Pakula-Mulligan company, with Natalie Wood. Sidney Lumet is doing Mary McCarthy's book *The Group*, and Pauline Kael is covering the production for *Life*. Miss Kael's book, *I Lost It at the Movies*, has had a spectacular success and people are now convinced she is the only critic worth bothering about in America. She has moved to New York ("to keep an eye on things") and may be offered any of a number of staggering positions there. That's probably the nicest thing that has happened this year.

HAPPENING HERE



NAZI FUNERAL IN "IT HAPPENED HERE".

John Gillett

HOW TO GET A FOOTHOLD in the film world; how to raise the money to make your film; how to sell it after it is finished. These are the three problems facing every independent or would-be independent film-maker; and everyone knows there are no ready answers. Three new British features, two completed and awaiting release and one as yet unfinished, show different ways of trying.

The best known is *It Happened Here*. Directed by Kevin Brownlow and Andrew Mollo, and started as long ago as 1956, this is a young man's reconstruction of life in England if the Nazis had won in 1940. Anthony Simmons' *Four in the Morning* is openly emotional and demanding in its exploration of relationships; and contains a performance, by Judi Dench, which is one of the most remarkable in the contemporary British cinema. Don Levy's *Herostratus* is still unfinished. It promises, from the rushes, to be the most experimental of the three.

The films were promoted from a variety of sources, and there is little common ground between their makers. Since his 'teens, Brownlow has been an enthusiastic film collector and researcher into the silent cinema; Simmons, an ex-documentary man, has a solid body of work behind him; Levy is another comparative newcomer armed with an ambitious aesthetic of film theory. The fact that *Herostratus* owes part of its financing to the BBC is a reminder of television's contribution to the climate which has partially stimulated this new work. Apart from taking away from the cinema and developing what used to be called "documentary", television

also promoted the recent series called *Six* which gave several young film-makers a chance to experiment. Though the results may have ranged from "interesting" to "disastrous", little of this would have been possible within the usual commercial framework.

Several other projects are under way, including Peter Watkins' *The War Game*, dealing with the possible effects of a nuclear attack on Britain, shot in the newsreel manner of his *Culloden*, and again being made for the BBC. (Watkins, incidentally, was an assistant director and actor on *It Happened Here*.) So the films are being made, somehow. How wide an audience they will reach, apart from television, is more problematical and depends largely on how quickly the pattern of distribution in this country can be given greater flexibility to accommodate new needs. Here, we are chiefly concerned with the act of production: the three case histories describe, mainly in the film-makers' words, some of the difficulties encountered and the steps taken to overcome them.

IT HAPPENED HERE

THE ORIGINAL IDEA for the film came to Kevin Brownlow in 1956 (when he was aged 18), after he had made an amateur film on 9.5 mm. from a story by Maupassant. Walking down Charlotte Street, he saw a man jump out of a black Citroen and shout a few words in German to his companion. He knew then that he wanted to make a film about an imaginary German occupation of Britain during the Second World War—a spectacular action-packed picture with no holds barred. At

first, there was little response from anyone, so he decided to tackle the most difficult scene first—a German rally in Trafalgar Square. After surmounting incredible difficulties (permission from the authorities, marshalling of crowds, etc.), the scene was shot on 16 mm., financed by himself plus extended credit from the company he worked for. “There was a basic outline but at no point did I feel I would be able to shoot the whole film. I wanted to prove to producers I could make pictures even if it meant doing only sections of this one.”

He went on shooting other scenes yet the results remained obstinately amateur. “Then someone told me I needed better uniforms, so I hunted around London spending as much as I could afford (my wages were then £4 10s. a week). One day in Portobello Road I got into conversation with a young man and told him I was looking for a Russian family in Kensington named Mollo who had some uniforms. The man, surprisingly enough, turned out to be Andrew Mollo and so our collaboration began. When I showed him my footage, he said it was totally incorrect. I was mortally offended, of course, but shot another session with Mollo as costume adviser. Then the camera proved to be defective . . .”

At the beginning of 1957, Brownlow decided to scrap everything except the Trafalgar Square sequence and start afresh with Mollo as military consultant and co-director. On June 2nd 1957 they began to shoot material they could really use, and now the keynote was scrupulous physical authenticity. Mollo scoured Europe for uniforms and equipment, finding them in the most unlikely places, and other collectors helped with civilian transport and wartime ‘set dressings’. “At this point, we still didn’t believe we could finish it, but at least we were exercising ourselves. Then I was asked to prepare a sequence to be shown on television; this was seen by a woman producer who offered money if a script was produced. But on seeing the treatment, she didn’t like our attitude to the resistance so we severed relations and looked round for a new sponsor.” Eventually, a well-known producer helped them to obtain the necessary investment for the film’s completion. The earlier material was blown-up, and the principal shooting on 35 mm. took place between July 1962 and April 1963; the final cost was £7,000.

Film-making of this kind, involving extras wearing real German uniforms, could scarcely fail to attract attention. Brownlow recalls with particular delight the moment in Parliament Square early one Sunday morning when they were shooting a German march-past from a playback song. The music attracted first the harassed production manager from the unit making *Day of the Triffids*, indignant that the expected deserted square was so surprisingly populated, and then fourteen Panzer officers from the Castlemartin tank training corps in Wales, who were enjoying a day of London sight-seeing. “Naturally, they were astonished but got quite interested in the proceedings, inspected our troops and pronounced them ‘absolutely correct’.” At other times, however, they managed to shoot quite complicated crowd scenes involving hand-held cameras without attracting undue notice. “Mind you, we only had five crew members—usually it was just me doubling as clapper boy, Peter Suschitzky our cameraman doing his own operating and Mollo pushing the dolly, plus Johanna Roeber our continuity girl and a sound mixer. It was highly unsatisfactory; I don’t recommend it but it was just a necessity. I would never make another film under these conditions.”

Although most of the cast is amateur, they found it necessary to use some professional players. “As we had to shoot during the day on some locations, the only people available were professionals. They got a minimum rate until such time as the film makes money. Sebastian Shaw, for instance, said it was very unusual but he liked the script and decided to take the part. The amateur players did it for love; admittedly we had several bad let-downs but it is always difficult with people who have not been paid.”

Brownlow was fully aware that this particular view of life in occupied Britain was bound to cause controversy. “At a certain stage, I knew it could not be just an action picture and gradually the political element became much more important. Mollo and I tried to find out everything about life in occupied

countries by researching hundreds of films, photographs and books. There was no point in imposing our political beliefs on a film which would only gain merit if it could be objective. The cinema has rarely done this and has never done it with Fascism. It’s too hot a subject.”

Of its festival showings to date, Brownlow feels that only the London Festival performance last October really worked to his satisfaction. “At Mannheim and Cork it died a lamentable death. In Germany, things went quite well until the scene when the real Nazis talk among themselves, and then I felt that the audience became uncomfortable. It was as if they suddenly realised that after all these years they couldn’t be purged just by watching a picture and saying ‘Thank God, I never thought like that.’” On the allegations from some quarters that the film is anti-semitic and pro-fascist, Brownlow reiterated that they wanted the audience to make up its own mind. “I would only quote Rotha’s *The Life of Adolf Hitler*, a vitriolic anti-Nazi film, which they say increased membership of the National Socialist party by one-third. Whatever you do is bound to appeal to latent Fascists, but they might as well know what they are; they will sooner or later!”



“IT HAPPENED HERE”.

Armed with this piece of apparently explosive merchandise, Brownlow was now beginning a long trek round distributors’ offices. At first there was considerable interest, but after several showings no offers were made and no explanations given, apart from hints that they found it a very disturbing picture. “Then the reviews started coming in, and one in *Variety* attracted everyone; we even got a call from Joe Levine’s office over here. Columbia asked us to ship a print out, then there was about half a minute’s pause and back came the answer—NO! I was in America myself later and showed it to all the top distributors but only received a series of curt telephone calls asking me to pick the film up.”

Brownlow’s efforts were finally rewarded, however. At the time of writing he is concluding a deal with United Artists, and the film has been accepted for the Critics Week in Cannes. He has obtained a qualified dispensation from the A.C.T.T. (although he is an A.C.T.T. member, the film clearly did not comply with union regulations) and from Equity, but is still faced with a backlog of complicated legal paperwork.

Brownlow clearly knew the chances he was taking and is not surprised by the comparatively few offers of other work since the film was seen. “If I was a producer, I don’t think I’d bother with fringe directors. You never know under what circumstances the footage was put together. Some French producers may have taken risks: they did have Chabrol, Truffaut and so on but they also had about twenty-five films on the shelf they couldn’t use. Also, Mollo and I are too fussy. Film-making is such an agonising business that you might as well do it for something worthwhile. It will take a very special subject to make me work again at the degree we worked on this picture. Our entire life was poured into it, and it gave us a hell of a beating on the way.”



JUDI DENCH IN "FOUR IN THE MORNING".

FOUR IN THE MORNING

UNLIKE BROWNLOW AND MOLLO, John Morris and Anthony Simmons, producer and director of *Four in the Morning*, are no strangers to the commercial industry. Simmons was making prize-winning shorts such as *Sunday by the Sea* and *Bow Bells* in the early Fifties, and his other work has included co-producing Losey's *Time Without Pity* and directing a feature for Sydney Box. Both he and John Morris also have extensive experience in making commercials and documentaries for Film Contracts and associated companies. After some disappointments in the feature field (including an abortive project for Buster Keaton now published as a novel, *The Optimists of Nine Elms*), Simmons decided that he didn't want merely to "slide into the machine". An idea for a short film set on the Thames in the early morning grew slowly, until he found himself with the three-part framework of *Four in the Morning*. (The original Thames story about a young suicide being pulled out of the river and taken to a mortuary, interwoven with two other episodes, one concerning a shy young man's meeting with a nightclub girl, the other tracing the tensions of a married couple.)

In late 1963 the project was taken to the N.F.F.C., who offered enough finance for a sixty-minute film without synchronised dialogue. Once the film was under way, they finally got backing for a full-length feature with dialogue. The N.F.F.C. contribution increased in amount but went down in percentage, the remainder of the money being found by producer and director. After nine months planning, shooting began in March 1964; excluding four weeks of rehearsals and some breaks when actors went off on other jobs, the filming took about 45 days.

Mr. Simmons emphasised the support he received from actors and crew. "They all wanted the same freedom as we did; we agreed on a small basic fee for the artists and a percentage of the film's profits afterwards." On matters of casting: "We had a little more difficulty in choosing the actors than the actresses. Ann Lynn (the nightclub girl) had been associated with the project for a long time, and there was no question of anyone but Judi Dench playing the wife. For the men we were lucky to get Brian Phelan, Norman Rodway and Joe Melia, actors with the flexibility of approach we needed."

Simmons' shooting methods were rather unorthodox: "I would only have half the script intact for each story at the beginning of shooting. Then on the basis of the scenes so far and the feelings of the actors about their characters, I would complete the rest as we went on. Remember, we 'researched' the situations, as it were, in rehearsals and the performances

developed accordingly. In the husband and wife scenes, we were working at very close quarters; we deliberately shot long takes to allow the performances to flow. There are two eight-minute scenes broken only with inserts for camera re-loading. Larry Pizer, our cameraman, was creatively involved in developing the story, guaranteeing us the visual quality and style of operating we wanted. Our editor, Fergus McDonnell, is a man of enormous experience. The way he knitted the three stories together is remarkable and the end result came only after we had tried several different ways of intercutting. He started in March, got thoroughly caught up in it and stayed on for nine months."

Concerning the actual production arrangements, Morris added: "The film was shot as a normal first feature with a crew of up to thirty, though the number of people varied according to circumstances. Everything was shot on location; the exterior crews were often small although we sometimes needed more people for the interiors in the house overlooking the river. Having a lot of people to lug things around just made it that much quicker."

What had happened, I asked, since the film's completion? Simmons: "My experience told me that you must go full out for what you have decided to make and I wanted to do a serious film on certain kinds of contemporary relationships. I gave myself problems, but this was the target I set out to achieve. So far, the basic response of those who have seen it is 'I love it, but . . .' Reactions are highly subjective; everyone seems affected by it in one way or another but no one has yet had the courage to want to sell it." Morris: "We tried to map out a future for the film. We had some previews and sought support from the critics and tested enough reactions to sense the right market for it."

At the time of writing (in April), the film had been shown to representatives of one major British distribution company who, Morris says, claimed not to understand it but, in truth, were not prepared really to try to disturb the pattern of distribution into which it failed to fit. Since then, however, they have found a distributor in Connoisseur Films (one of the more specialised British companies); which means that Morris and Simmons have reached their first goal in getting the film shown.

HEROSTRATUS

HEROSTRATUS, OUR THIRD FILM, is the first feature of Don Levy, a young film-maker known mainly for the shorts he made for the Nuffield Foundation Unit for the History of Ideas, including *Time Is*. He was also the first post-graduate student at the Slade School under Thorold Dickinson's tuition. The original idea for the film came from a story written by Alan Daiches (son of David Daiches) at Cambridge; Levy took the core of the story and used it mainly for the end of his film. Somewhat difficult to summarise, it concerns an exhibitionist young man who contemplates suicide but wants to be *seen* to die. He persuades an advertising executive to promote this scheme and a strange relationship springs up between the two and the advertising man's 'secretary'. Levy wrote a precis (interweaving overtones of the Greek legend) which was accepted by the B.F.I. Experimental Fund in October 1962; he was given £1,500 and requested to raise the rest of the budget himself (at this time, the total was envisaged to be just over £3,000). Huw Wheldon (now Controller of BBC Television Programmes) became interested in Levy's project and arranged a BBC contribution of £1,500.

It was now the end of 1963, and prices of film materials had risen. Although Levy had raised enough money for a black-and-white feature of about 70 minutes, James Quinn (then director of the British Film Institute) felt that the original plan to make the film in colour should be adhered to. Early in 1964, therefore, Mr. Quinn put some of his own money into the Experimental Fund and thus into the film's budget, which was now about £4,500. Levy and Quinn (who had become co-producer) then began a long battle to cut costs still further. Fortunately, from among the unit members they gathered together, the lighting cameraman Keith Allams (a

teacher at the London School of Film Technique) had his own camera, sound recording equipment came from another technician, and they received generous offers of gifts and facilities from the film trade and many others.

Levy spent a good deal of his time testing artists: having decided that this was to be a film developed entirely by improvisation around a firm narrative, he wanted a particularly malleable and intense type of player. After extensive improvised auditions, he settled on Michael Gothard, then a drama student, for the lead and Gabriella Licudi and Peter Stephens for the other main parts. Everyone joined on a profit sharing contract. Main shooting took place between August 1964 and March 1965 in a variety of London locations (there is no studio work), including the Royal College of Art, Regent Street Polytechnic and a slum house in Paddington; synchronised sound was used throughout.

When I interviewed Mr. Levy, editing was only just beginning, but he showed me some assorted rushes and explained something of his attitude towards the use of colour and the experiments he was making with new kinds of acting technique. "The colour is very closely controlled and tied to the film's emotional forces but not to character subjectivity in the Antonioni manner, which I also find sacrifices mood and content for chic photographic quality. We employed a wide variety of camera techniques including scenes precisely under- and over-exposed and others with a marked black-and-white or grey texture. The film has several long takes up to four minutes. Some people are afraid of these, but I feel I need them here as the actors require space to reveal their deepest states of intensity." To illustrate the colour style he showed me a bedroom scene with a girl weaving in and out of a completely dark background, followed by a long take on to a bed shot in copper brown flesh tints.

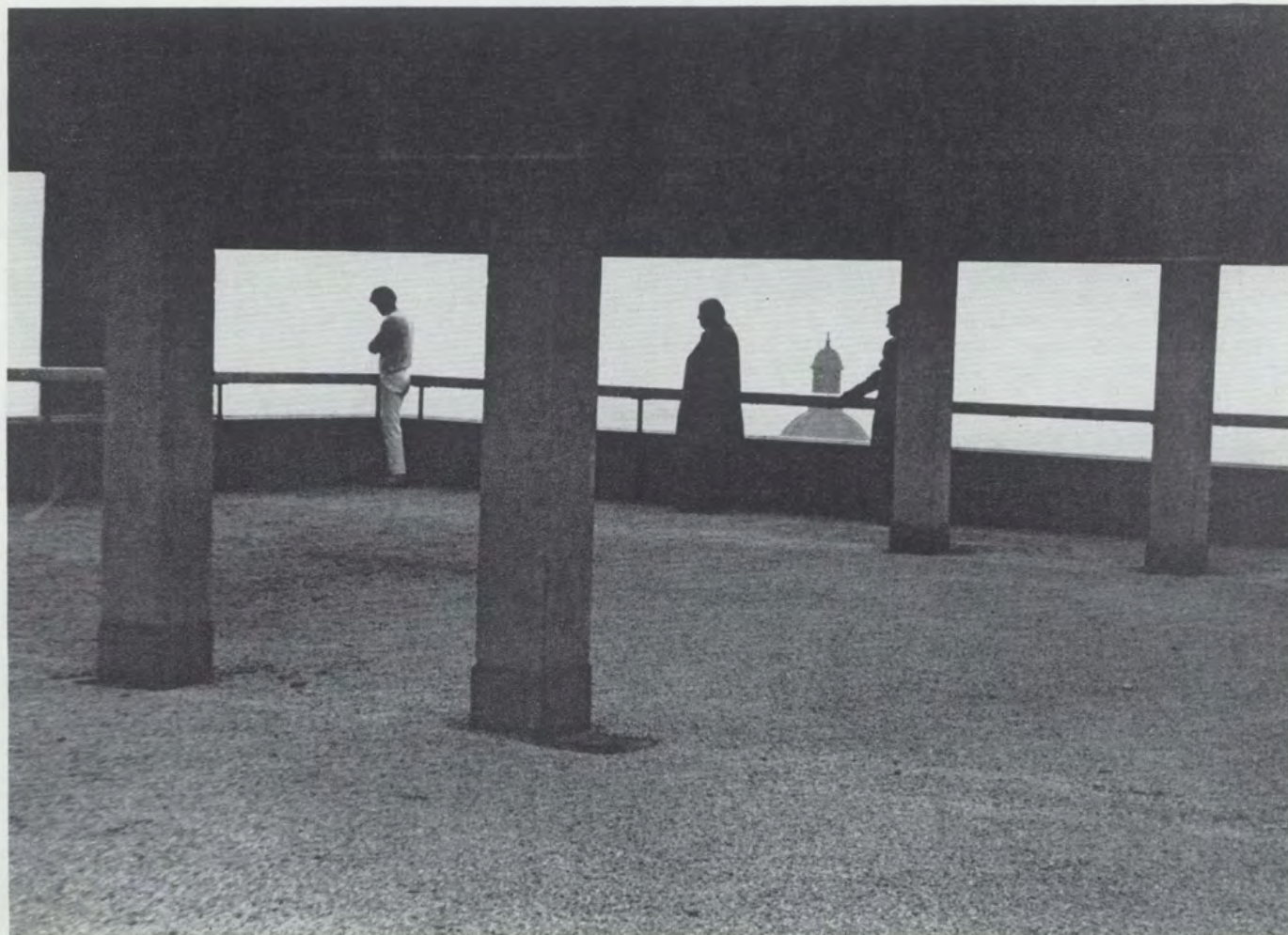
"I shot on real locations normally regarded as impossible because this gives the action the *quality* of the actual places.

We also wanted to re-create the broken syntax of real speech; therefore, we never used any fixed dialogue or detailed action—and the players never saw a script. Details of characterisation and dialogue were all developed during a very complicated process of improvisation and recall, designed to produce through various psychological methods a peculiar emotional state whereby the acting became *behaviour*. The improvisation was not based on their own characters (as in other improvised work), but was used as a technique for freeing and distorting action and reaction and *enveloping* the characters of the play."

Mr. Levy added that sometimes the actors appeared to be in a state akin to hypnosis, during which they were able to operate by drawing directly on the subconscious. In connection with one scene I saw where the girl, posed in the corner of the screen against a white wall, goes into a long hysterical outburst, he commented: "The actress was not informed of the end result required. The scene was gradually built up by a violent actress-character conflict during the recall and preparation which took about two hours. When it finally occurred, two members of the unit were not able to watch and one was unable to work."

With only a few extra shots to be taken the film was, in April, somewhat over budget due to various difficulties and unforeseen camera faults. I asked Mr. Levy if he was generally satisfied with the way things had gone. "The whole project has grown considerably in ambition since we began; it will now be a film of about 100 minutes in Eastman Colour and widescreen. If we were seriously compromised, it was only by lack of money. The basic idea was certainly accomplished and, although some extremely startling things have happened, these have only opened the way to vast unexplored spaces both in film-making and drama . . . and now it's a matter of taking the next obstacle, which I suppose when beaten will also leave us dissatisfied and keen for the next."

ON LOCATION FOR "HEROSTRATUS".



Sergei Eisenstein & Upton Sinclair

Ronald Gottesman

ALTHOUGH, AS DANIEL AARON MOST RECENTLY has observed (*Writers on the Left*, 1961, p. 445), a considerable literature has grown up about the relationships between Upton Sinclair and Sergei Eisenstein at the time of the making of *Que Viva Mexico* (1930-32), the controversy has generated more heat than light. (Typical of the confusion over the whole affair is Aaron's misattribution of motive and misdating of documents in the book mentioned above.) In part the relationship remains clouded because some of the documentary evidence has not been available. As a first step toward clarifying this significant episode in the lives of both men, I offer here some of this material.

One of the central documents—Stalin's cablegram to Upton Sinclair—has been mentioned in print by both Sinclair and Eisenstein's biographer, Marie Seton, but never reproduced in full. In Appendix VI to her *Sergei M. Eisenstein*, Miss Seton reprints "Correspondence between the Author and Upton Sinclair." In a letter dated March 20, 1950, she had referred to some materials in Sinclair's hands, including "a cablegram from Stalin declaring that Eisenstein was considered a deserter," a cable which Sinclair had told people about, and requested a photostatic copy of this and other documents for inclusion in the biography she was then completing. Sinclair replied on March 26 that since the masses of papers from this period of his life were stored, it would take "weeks to find the stuff." He did go on to confirm that he had received a "long cablegram from Stalin, telling me that the Soviet people considered [Eisenstein] a renegade and had no more use for him." Even though Miss Seton again urged Sinclair to uncover the document (March 31, 1950) since "only Stalin's cable to you can support your word that Eisenstein was regarded as a renegade," Sinclair, whose wife was very ill at the time, did not choose to send a copy of this cable.

Sinclair most recently referred to the cablegram in *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (New York, 1962). There he indicates that as relations worsened between Eisenstein and Hunter Kimbrough, Sinclair's brother-in-law and the business manager of the expedition, he "sent a cablegram to Stalin, asking him to order Eisenstein to return home . . ." Stalin replied, Sinclair says, that "they [the Soviets] no longer had any use for Eisenstein and considered him a renegade." The cablegram then went into a "secret treasure box that contained such things as the letters from Jefferson Davis and his daughter, Winnie."

As the reproduction makes clear, Sinclair did have the cablegram. As the other two letters printed make equally clear, however, Sinclair had not asked Stalin to have Eisenstein ordered home. Indeed, at this time the relationship between Sinclair and Eisenstein, though perhaps strained, was by no means broken. That Sinclair at this point courageously and magnanimously supported Eisenstein is beyond question. Animosity and bitterness, charge and counter-charge, were to be later developments.

Two letters from Upton Sinclair

Joseph Stalin,
Kremlin,
Moscow, U.S.S.R.
Dear Comrade,

You may have heard that I have taken the job of financing a moving picture which the Soviet director, Sergei Eisenstein is making in Mexico. It is going to be an extraordinary work, and I think will be a revelation of the moving-picture art.

This work has brought me into touch with a young technician in a Hollywood laboratory, a Russian named Fred Danashew, from Moscow. I have found him a devoted worker,

and in many conversations I have made certain of his enthusiasm for Soviet Russia. He came to me the other day to report that his father, Anatole Danashevsky, had been convicted of sabotage, and he asked me to write and tell you what I know about both him and his father.

I was, I believe, the cause of the father's being admitted to Soviet Russia. Anatole Danashevsky was earning \$300 a week as a moving picture technician here in Hollywood. About 1923 or 1924 he desired to go to Soviet Russia to assist in developing the film industry, and several of his friends came to me and told me about him and to vouch for his loyalty, so that I would write a letter of recommendation. I have known these men intimately. There is no need to burden you with details. Suffice it to say, they are all loyal comrades who have proved it in hard fights. They are now all convinced that a cruel mistake has been made in the conviction of Danashevsky. I can assure you that the charge that he was hired to go to Russia to damage Russian industry is wholly outside of possibility. I have read your recent statement about the new status of technicians, and therefore I venture to ask you to have this case of Danashevsky investigated, and to consider it a case for clemency and a fresh start.

Some day you will see the picture which Eisenstein is making, and realise that Soviet technique has advanced another step and been crowned with fresh laurels.

If my health permits, I plan to go to Russia next Spring, and hope that we may meet.

Sincerely,

October 26, 1931.

My dear Comrade Stalin,

I received your cablegram about the matter of my request for amnesty for Anatole Danashevsky, and I have replied by cable.

As to your statements concerning Eisenstein, they have caused me both distress and bewilderment. Of course I do not have your sources of information in Moscow, but I have many sources of information here, and I can tell you a number of facts positively known to me.

1. I have never heard Eisenstein speak a word of disloyalty to the Soviet government. I have half a dozen friends here who were also his friends during his six months stay, and they all confirm my impression and make the same statement.

2. Eisenstein had a contract with Paramount by which they were to pay him \$3,000 per week when he started work. This would have been a very comfortable start in the bourgeois world, and all he had to do was to sacrifice to a slight degree his artistic integrity.

3. He was ferociously attacked in Hollywood by the Fascist element here. They denounced him as a red dog, a supporter of murder and assassination—and so on. He made no attempt to protect himself from this, as he could very easily have done by making a few concessions.

4. When he came to me he explained his desire to make a picture in Mexico by the fact that he did not want to go back to the Soviet government defeated—that is without having accomplished something abroad. We agreed to try to raise the money for him to make an independent picture in Mexico. Eisenstein refused to sign a contract until he had discussed the matter with L. I. Monosson, of the Amkino Corporation. He said to me in the presence of my wife: "Monosson is my boss, and it would be discourteous of me not to consult him." Monosson gave his consent to the undertaking.

5. Eisenstein insisted as a part of the contract that the rights of the picture must be given to the Soviet Union free, and a written agreement to that effect is in the possession of Amkino.

6. The many delays in the work are not Eisenstein's fault. On his arrival in Mexico, the Mexican government arrested the entire party. Since then it has been kept wound up in miles of red tape over questions of censorship and the shipping out of the film. Eisenstein was ill for some time, and his assistant, Alexandrof, was ill for several months. Then came the rainy season, during which no photography was possible. Moreover, it was impossible at the outset to know how much material there was and of what an exceptionally fine character, and it

was inevitable that the scope of the picture should expand after the artist got to work.

7. All these facts have been given to Amkino at every stage of the work. Quite recently Amkino signed with me an agreement to invest \$25,000 in the picture, of which \$5,000 is to be spent in Mexico and the balance upon the cutting of the picture and the synchronisation which is to be done in Hollywood. It is inconceivable that Amkino should have been willing to take such a step if it had considered that Eisenstein was untrustworthy.

8. The picture is not a revolutionary picture in the proletarian sense of the word. No such picture could be made in Mexico, nor could it be exhibited in the United States nor distributed through our film channels. It is a picture of the primitive life of the Mexican people, a great and extremely beautiful work of art. The principal episode, about one-third of the film, exposes the oppression of the peons in the Diaz days, and another episode shows the peons in revolt and fighting for their freedom. The spirit of the picture is one which will please all those who defend the rights of the exploited and colonial peoples. Seeing the picture one knows the whole of Mexico, her external aspects and her soul, and I venture the prediction that the people of Soviet Russia will crown this work with their enthusiastic applause. We have seen some twenty-five miles of this film, so far, and the little

group of friends who have shared the privilege with me, all are unanimous in their opinions.

9. Eisenstein has every expectation of returning to the Soviet Union. At any rate he has expressed it to everyone here with whom I have discussed the matter, and I have letters from him in which he urges me to accompany him on his return.

All the above are facts positively known to me. I think they justify me in asking you to suspend your judgment concerning Eisenstein until his picture has been completed. If it works out as I confidently expect, your government not only will have a peerless work of art free of charge, but your film organisation in this country will have a large share of the financial profits. If Eisenstein returns to Russia crowned by the applause of art lovers throughout the world, I hope and believe that the rumours against him will die away.

In the meantime, I shall say nothing to him about your cablegram, because I believe it would distress him to such an extent as perhaps to destroy his work.

Sincerely,

November 22, 1931.

Mr. Gottesman is working on the Upton Sinclair Archive, at the University of Indiana, and preparing with Professor Harry Geduld a book on the correspondence between Eisenstein and Sinclair.

CLASS OF SERVICE
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable sign above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Form 1220S
SIGNS
DL = Day Letter
NM = Night Message
NL = Night Letter
LCO = Deferred Cable
CLT = Cable Letter
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The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.
Received at 1931 NOV 21 AM 11 35

SA155 VIA RCA=CD MOSCOU 118 21 2030

UNITED STATES OF AMERIKA UPTON SINCLAIR STATION A=
PASADENA (CALIF) = 1513 *Quint*

LETTER RECEIVED STOP BODY OF SURVEILLANCE ACCUSES DANASHEVSKY
OF SABOTAGE STOP MATERIALS WE HAVE IT SEEMS TO ME DONT SPEAK
IN FAVOUR OF DANASHEVSKY STOP IF YOU INSIST I CAN SOLICITE
BEFORE THE HIGHPOWERED BODY FOR THE AMNESTY STOP EISENSTEIN
LOOSE HIS COMRADES CONFIDENCE IN SOVIET UNION STOP HE IS
THOUGHT TO BE DESERTER WHO BROKE OFF WITH HIS OWN COUNTRY
STOP AM AFRAID THE PEOPLE HERE WOULD HAVE NO INTEREST IN
HIM SOON STOP AM VERY SORRY BUT ALL ASSERT IT IS THE FACT
STOP WISH YOU TO BE WELL AND TO FULFILL YOUR PLAN OF COMING
TO SEE US STOP MY REGARDS STOP 2783 21/11 31=

STALIN.

(regards)

St. 0995

Alb

FILM REVIEWS

MAJOR DUNDEE and INVITATION TO A GUNFIGHTER

THE SCANDAL OF *Major Dundee* (BLC/Columbia) has already been widely commented (see p. 136). The distributors, disheartened perhaps by the vitriolic reactions of American critics, appear to have rather washed their hands of the film; my second viewing of it at a London press screening found two scenes missing (one of them vitally important) which had been there the day before. The story doesn't quite end on this note of distress, though: the last quarter of the film may be cut to ribbons, but the first ninety minutes are magnificent.

The theme takes up and elaborates the conflict of *Guns in the Afternoon*, where two old comrades find themselves in a situation which revives and tests old loyalties. Major Dundee (Charlton Heston) is a regular army officer, a martinet who lives by the book, and who once cast a vote against his friend Captain Tyreen (Richard Harris), cashiered for an infringement of the said book. Now, towards the end of the Civil War, Dundee has for some unspecified reason been relegated to a backwater as commander of Fort Benlin, a Federal prison for Confederate soldiers where Tyreen is a prisoner. Desperately short of men, he obstinately determines to wipe out a band of marauding Apaches, assembles a ragged group of volunteers, forces Tyreen to join with a few hand-picked Confederate prisoners, and sets off on a forlorn pursuit which drags out over weary months, and which gradually realigns and clarifies the characters of the two men.

Despite the cuts which thin out the final stages of the story, and despite a flabby performance from Richard Harris which very nearly destroys the balance, the film is a fascinating study in the swing of a pendulum. For all his air of authority and decision, everything Dundee touches goes subtly wrong; he leads his men into trap after trap in a way which could just as well be attributed to bad luck as to error, until he finally forgets himself so much as to break his own rule-book by bathing outside his pickets, is wounded by an Indian arrow, and ends up in a prolonged drunken stupor in the Mexican town where his wound is

being treated. It is hereabouts that the cuts begin to make the film go wrong, obscuring its line of development by making it appear that drink is the key to Dundee's problem. It may be a problem, as Dundee himself suggests, but his real trouble is inflexibility. As Dundee sinks lower and lower into self-distrust, so Tyreen rises; not because of a change of character—he remains perfectly consistent from his first sullen arrogance in prison to the final absurd gallantry of his single-handed charge against a French cavalry troop—but because he gains a kind of moral ascendancy.

Tyreen, the fantasist with the white plume in his hat, who risked his career for a point of honour and who always remembers to kiss a lady's hand even when duty calls, is a man who lives by people rather than by rules, by the truth of a situation rather than its logic: he is, in short, flexible. When he is forced to keep the peace by apologising to Aesop, the Negro soldier baited by one of the Confederates, and Dundee thanks him for making a gesture which must have been painful for a Southerner, Tyreen simply remarks, "Mr. Aesop is a fine soldier"; and when Dundee, against Tyreen's will, insists on executing one of the Confederates for desertion, Tyreen shoots the man himself rather than let him face the firing-squad. On both occasions Dundee acts correctly; but Tyreen acts *sensibly*, in the circumstances of a situation where everybody is under extreme tension and where every good man is an asset.

This theme is developed with a sweeping subtlety—broad strokes concealing the delicacy underneath—which recalls Ford at his best. Visually the film is magnificent, with its parched landscapes of dry brush and crumbling villages, its sculptural compositions, and proud cavalry movements across river and plain. Scene after scene might have come straight out of *Wagon-master* or *My Darling Clementine*, but linking them all is a touch of the bizarre which is specifically Peckinpah's. Remember the church service in a temporarily closed beer saloon in *The Deadly Companions*, or the frustrated gunman shooting up the

chickens in *Guns in the Afternoon*? Here there is Tyreen's strangely biblical gesture of defiance, raising his chains against Dundee while in prison; the weird, bird-like old Apache who materialises benignly out of the night with the missing white children whom everybody is looking for; the grim arrival in the Mexican village through its square hung with corpses, suddenly erupting into a gay fiesta of drink and dancing with "Viva Dundee!" scrawled on the walls.

At the same time there is a relaxed control, an unerring eye for juxtapositions, which reminds one that Peckinpah is one of those rare directors with an ability to keep his action racing swiftly, and yet leave one with the impression that there is all the time in the world for pleasurable contemplation. A woman in black watches the troop ride out, posed against a gracefully crumbling archway like a figure from a Goya; immaculately uniformed French cavalry dispose themselves in neat battle array with all the painful vulnerability of freshly-painted toy soldiers; and the images linger long after the action has swept over them.

Unlike Peckinpah, Richard Wilson works primarily for the ear, and *Invitation to a Gunfighter* (United Artists) can't compete visually, though its cramped studio sets and penny-pinching backdrops do ultimately begin to pull with the film, giving an odd impression that the tiny New Mexico town in which the action takes place is claustrophobically closed in on its own problems.

A Confederate soldier returns home after the end of the Civil War to find that his farm has been stolen, and the embarrassed townsfolk, Northerners to a man, hire a gunfighter to get rid of him. This almost classically simple situation is quickly turned inside out, however: the fastidious gunfighter noses out corruption, and decides to bleed the sinners before honouring his contract, until the despairing townsfolk are forced to plead with the crack-shot Southerner to kill the gunfighter hired to kill him. "People aren't simple, are they?" the gunfighter ruefully remarks, and motives soon become inextricably confused in a

CAVALRY ENCAMPMENT IN "MAJOR DUNDEE".



town where the Mexican inhabitants are strictly segregated, the Southerner who fought for slavery is the only person who treats them as equals, and the gunfighter who still intends to kill him turns out to be the son of a slave from New Orleans.

As much as anything, it is the skill with which Wilson interweaves his complex characters and dialogue that makes this film so striking. At the centre is the figure of the gunfighter, conventionally impassive and dressed in immaculate black suit and ruffled shirt, unconventionally introducing himself by writing his name on the blackboard ("Jules Gaspard D'Estaing") and giving his bemused listeners helpful hints on pronunciation ("Just a touch of diphthong..."). His quirks—accompanying himself in a French lullaby on the spinet, for instance—might seem so unconventional as to be conventional, were it not for the fact that he is overplaying in a cat and mouse game throughout, driving his hosts to hysteria by gambits such as winning a poker hand with five kings ("I've never seen such a town. Nobody challenges the deal...").

Almost the only false note in this film comes when the townsfolk press forward to shoulder the body of the gunfighter *à la* Olivier's Hamlet when he is accidentally killed at the end. Otherwise, the acting is excellent, particularly Yul Brynner (the gunfighter), George Segal (the Southerner), and Janice Rule (the girl loved by both of them in their own fashion); and Elizabeth Wilson's script is a model of intelligence.

TOM MILNE

WOMAN OF THE DUNES

GRAIN UPON GRAIN, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap.' (Clov in *endgame*.)

Beckettian has been the adjective applied to Teshigahara's film, and it's true that just as the piling up of the grains in Beckett's play inexorably prints the passing of another day in a life scoured of false hoping, so the flow of sand in these dunes wears away the illusions obscuring the entomologist's life. But *Woman of the Dunes* (Contemporary) attempts to go further: having stripped the protagonist of his foolish aspirations, it is not content to leave him, like a Beckett personage, dryly enduring a disabused existence. It shows us a kind of rebirth: the exercise of man's ingenuity, the conquest of nature to ease the material burden of living, are hinted as a measure of salvation. A comparison with Beckett only interprets half the film, which is a strange mixture of Zen transcendence of worldly vanity, and intimations of a communal ethic. Yet this film does have the stark, irrefutable quality of a Beckett play, the severe intransigence of myth. It seems important to explore how it achieves this quality; then perhaps the film's ability to make sense on several levels—ontological, sexual, psychological, social—will become clearer.

The credits thrust the murmur of the world at us. Over a soundtrack of hooters, engines, and half-heard conversation, the titles of the film attempt to thrust their way through a forest of rubber-stamped approvals, permissions, validations. Then we are plunged into the shifting, formless wasteland of the sand, ripples and whorls engulfing a solitary figure seen from behind,

striding against them, into them. The figure seems to be Everyman, and the sequence shows the film's method: having given us a landmark (the city sounds), it plunges us into the totally unfamiliar, using the cinema's uncertain sense of scale (is the camera two inches, two feet or two miles away?) to bemuse us still further and set us afloat on a changeable sea where new meanings may emerge, metamorphoses occur. The camera's power to turn fact into metaphor catches the intent of Kobo Abé's book perfectly, and in some respects has the edge over the book when it comes to making us feel the sense of invading formlessness the sand represents.

This first sequence, with its cross-fades, pull-backs, and the sculptural inhuman perfection of nature's wave-patterns, unlooses all the normal bonds of life. But the teacher-entomologist who has left Tokyo to seek insect specimens among the sand dunes is still haunted by these past bonds. He is involved in an unsatisfactory relationship with a woman, who appears in dream-like recall against the dunes. 'You argue too much,' she tells him, and we gather further from the book that 'rather than losing their passion, they had frozen it by over-idealising it.' This episode lacks clarity in the film, but we are still left with a sense of breakdown due to over-classification, rigidity, a crisis of corroboration.

Night falls and along come the three men from the village, inviting him to stay the night. They appear with the abruptness of figures from a chronicle or a ballad, which helps to give the story its imperturbable quality. Down the rope ladder goes Jumpei, into the house where he will stay seven years. The encounter between him and the widow who lives in the house is beautifully acted, as the film is throughout. Eiji Okada gives the man an adolescent aggressiveness, flaunting his know-how, making it quite clear that his entomology fulfils a desire both to act God, sadistically impaling the insects, and to achieve corroboration and immortality by getting his name into the insect encyclopaedia.

The main part of the film shows the stripping down of Jumpei's pretensions, his merging with the world of the sand. Jumpei learns to re-interpret everything he has believed, from the experience of sex to the effect of sand on wood. In his sand-pit, he goes through an experience similar to that of Lear in the storm—'expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.' He accepts intellectually that the woman has to shovel sand each night, though his reason still revolts against it. Next morning he discovers the rope ladder is gone, and tries to climb the sides of the sand ravine. It is like climbing a waterfall. (One of the ironies of the film is the visual pun between sand ripples and water ripples, agonising when Jumpei is parched with thirst.) He is beginning to learn the truth with his senses. He breaks up the house to make a ladder, but the woman was right when she said that sand rotted things: the wood is brittle. He ties her up in an attempt to blackmail the village elders to let him go: they merely withhold his water supply until he understands that his fate is to stay with the woman and help her clear the sand each night so that the village will not be smothered.

He begins to work, and once more starts to enter a situation not just with his rigid brain but with his nerves and muscles. This time he does not even offer alternatives to clearing the sand, but merely asks why she does it. 'Do we dig sand to live or live to



"WOMAN OF THE DUNES".

dig sand' is not merely a metaphysical question, it is also a social one about poor people. And her answer—'If there were no sand no one would notice me'—has a social meaning, as well as being an indirect rebuke (why else is Jumpei hoping to find a new species of insect?). For the actions of the village in kidnapping visitors and in selling poor quality sand to building contractors, are the actions of 'primitive rebels', people who have been ignored by the mainstream of society and reduced to a black fatalism which incites them to grim, dumb protest of this kind. It is a hard code of living, hard on outsiders and hard on its own—which explains why the villagers can refuse water to the woman as well as the man. They know that her short-term sacrifice will bring long-term solace if they can subdue the man by thirst.

In this section of the film, Teshigahara develops his technique of *trompe l'oeil*, dissolving all the landmarks by which we normally negotiate life, merging Jumpei with the sand. The camera hangs inches away from skin; pores are the same as grains of sand. Hair against skin makes a shape like the streams of sand. Everything is interfused. And against this metamorphosis, we see the irreducible signs of human need; we learn again the sheer delight of soap over an encrusted body, drinking becomes almost a sacrament when the woman grips the spout of the kettle between her teeth. And when the man makes a beacon to signal for help by wrapping burning cloth round a long bamboo pole and waving it in the air, we are brought back to all our fears of the dark and our cry for recognition. Desire and interfusion come together when the man makes love to the woman, a scene deeply moving because so defenceless, the hovering camera shifting round the couple like the sand itself, making us almost ashamed to watch this naked redefinition of human need.

But nothing in this film is fixed, and the man still yearns for the world beyond. He wants a newspaper, a radio. He makes a rope and climbs out, but after stumbling around in purgatorial darkness and getting stuck in a swamp, is returned by the villagers to his pit. He sets a trap to catch a crow, to tie a message to its leg for the outside world. But he must be worn down still further. In reply to his request to be allowed

up for an occasional walk on the beach, the villagers demand to watch the man and the woman making love. In a climactic scene which is spoiled by 'exotic' music and masks that too obviously come out of a studio props room, the man tries to force the woman to mime copulation in front of the assembled village. In spite of the naïve theatricality of this scene, it has a cruel power of dog-eat-dog which is central to the harsh situation the film depicts. In the following scene three details show us that the man has touched bottom: he laughs convulsively at a trite cartoon in the paper which six months previously he would not have even glanced at, he spills the beads the woman is threading, and he destroys his collection of specimens.

In the last movement of the film a more sober style replaces the microscopic prying which carried the burden of disintegration and merging which is the film's main action. The justification for this change of style is stated clearly in the book when Abé describes the man's feelings on discovering that his crow-trap is a suction-pump, that his means of escape can become an end in itself in a situation he has accepted. 'He was still in the hole, but it seemed as if he were already outside... Perhaps what he had been seeing up to now was not the sand but grains of sand... To eyes with magnifying lenses everything seemed tiny and insectlike.' At first he lives his discovery as a secret thing, a personal achievement and a means to defy the villagers by having a supply of water. But when the village rallies round the woman at her miscarriage (we see her hoisted up the side in a blanket-grapple, a fragile human), he turns to the village leader, ready to hand over his useful invention. He is on the threshold of a new engagement with life, having passed through waves and layers of redefinition. This film, which began with the broken imprints of rubber stamps, ends with the clear reflection of a human face in water.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

REPULSION

RECENTLY, HERE AND IN Europe and America, a handful of films has combined technical brio, a hint of mysticism, and female mental/sexual unbalance in such a way as to cater for all tastes and disturb few. Occasionally, as in *Il Demonio* or *Through a Glass Darkly*, the soil is rich and strange and one is disturbed. More often, madness or sexual aberration is a far thinner basis for a horror addict's field-day (Bava's *Night is the Phantom*; that hilarious remake of *Caligari*) or a psycho-analyst's joke-kit (*Marnie*). It is rather shocking to find that Roman Polanski's first British film *Repulsion* (Compton-Cameo) should fall more into the second, Bava category than the first, at the same time living up remorselessly to the gloom implicit in its title. Worse still, it hardly seems designed to cater for the taste of anyone other than a trained psychiatrist, while it disturbs solely in the way that *The Snake Pit* disturbed, leaving one pointlessly dispirited and confused. Its possible effect on anybody going through a period of crisis or depression doesn't bear thinking about.

Briefly, for the story at least is simple enough, *Repulsion* is about a young Belgian manicurist whose pretty, doll-like features mask a galloping mental disorder. She is revolted, yet subconsciously fascinated, by



"REPULSION": CATHERINE DENEUE AND YVONNE FURNEAUX.

men—particularly the husky salesman with whom her sister is having an affair. Her sleep banished by loud moans of sexual gratification coming from the next room, she spends her working days in listless, silent brooding. Apart from the salesman, who suggests she needs treatment, there is an inexplicable lack of concern over her obvious sickness. Her long-suffering employer (Valerie Taylor, excellent) does virtually nothing when she pierces a customer's finger with nail-clippers. Her boy friend appears not to notice her spasmodic facial twitches. Her sister goes on holiday with the lover, leaving her with a cooked rabbit and the rent. The rabbit is left out to become fly-blown, the landlord calls for the rent and is soundly razor-slashed, and the girl succumbs to hallucinations and final insanity.

Polanski has retained his quite un-English visual eloquence. And of course he is clinically persuasive, as almost all young Central European film-makers are when dealing with morbid psychology. But the film remains an irresponsible fiction, compounded of chic reticence, sundry melodramatics (both murders handled like something out of, and less than, *Psycho*; the lovers' return from holiday at the height of a rainstorm), and an overall rhythm that is intolerably lethargic and portentous.

The ending is especially facile. The camera pans slowly over the girl's belongings, then tracks in on a photograph of her as a child till only the eyes are in close-up, "all funny and wild" as Peter Cook might say. Nice to know that we are meant to feel something towards the poor girl, even if this final, isolated call upon our emotions has been delayed 104 minutes. Regrettably no such call can be said to have been made upon our reason. The girl only seems to interest Polanski as a case-history, and within that limit Catherine Deneuve is very adequate. But since none of the characters is drawn in any depth, it is impossible to accept the film as a tract in social responsibility. Partly this is due to stiff dialogue (the lustful landlord might almost have strayed out of Victorian melodrama); partly to Polanski's failure to observe his Londoners convincingly. When the neighbours crowd

in to view the carnage, they react like zombies and invite a comic reaction, whereas Polanski's intention (as far as it can be discerned at all) was presumably to comment along "There but for the Grace of God" lines on bed-sitter loneliness.

One suspected in *Knife in the Water* that Polanski's emotional range was narrow, his flair being rather for mood and tension. Here, he appears to have thrown away everything but the symbolism. And as art, as abstraction, even the symbolism fails to arouse much interest. Those affectionate shots of rotting rabbit, those balletic razor-slashings, have neither Hitchcock's chill deliberation nor Buñuel's compulsive savagery. What Polanski does understand is hallucination. Because he understands he allows his style to speak for itself, with assurance. When the girl believes that great cracks are appearing in the wall, that the wall has turned to mud and hands are coming through it to grasp her breasts, that a rapist is lurking under the sheets of her bed, Polanski shows us these fantasies as naked facts. They are vastly effective, whereas the rest of the film has that gurgling, soapy sound of muffled intentions going down the plug hole like bath water.

PETER JOHN DYER

NOW ABOUT THESE WOMEN

THE EASIEST WAY OUT of dealing with an embarrassing white elephant like Bergman's *Now About These Women* (Gala) is to follow everybody else in sweeping it away under the carpet as a laborious attempt at farce. To do so, however, is to ignore a haunting aftertaste of quiet melancholy which lingers long after the film is gone. It also happens to be enchanting to look at and frequently extremely funny—so much so that it commands a second visit; and this time one penetrates the outer defences to discover why it appears to be limping so heavily.

Ostensibly, the film is about the humiliations of the critic Cornelius (Jarl Kulle), blocked at every turn in his efforts to

interview Felix, a famous cellist whose biography he is writing. As Cornelius wanders around Felix's fantastically decorative summer residence (an enchanted, pastel-coloured fairy bordello), struggling through the maze of women who guard their Maestro's privacy with jealous adoration, Bergman takes amiably malicious revenge on his critics: Cornelius, a grotesquely self-conscious poseur, is tormented, teased, shot at, photographed in compromising situations, forced to dress up as a woman, and blown up with fireworks. These humiliations, shot with the full barrage of silent comedy techniques to the jazzy accompaniment of "Yes, We Have No Bananas" on the soundtrack, are often deliciously and unexpectedly funny (Cornelius, forced at the point of a parasol to jump out of a window, popping up again as a face in a sea of foliage; his struggles with a bust which becomes noisily detached from its pedestal during a concert), and sometimes oddly moving (his nocturnal encounters with the desperate Traviata, a lonely black-draped figure levelling a wildly wavering gun). Yet, even though they make up the bulk of the film, these sequences are merely interludes—they are the dashes in a Morse Code message, meaningless without the dots.

If all that one sees is the dashes, then one is in precisely the same boat as Cornelius, who never actually sees Felix, but remains trapped by the grotesque surface of life in the chateau. What Cornelius never discovers is the harmony underneath, revealed when Felix's presence, or the low note of his cello, brings order to chaos. There is a secret life in the chateau, to which a disruptive note is brought by the brashly inquisitive Cornelius: Adelaide (Felix's official wife) and Tristan (his valet) stand on the lawn, a harmonious composition in black and white, she aiming a revolver, he watching through field-glasses; but as Cornelius prances into view, she fires, shattering statue after statue in the peaceful garden. Over and over again throughout the film, Bergman makes use of his peculiar ability to suspend a moment in time so that a sequence of wild farce crystallises into a mood of tranquil melancholy. The ladies sit quarrelling bitchily on the sunny terrace until the sound of Felix's cello swelling out from the music pavilion suddenly stills them; the wild frenzy of the firework sequence, with women screaming all over the garden and the chateau about to go up in a blaze of glory, ends with a tranquil long shot of Felix standing on the balcony, gently waving his handkerchief until the screams turn into delighted mutters of "He's looking at us," and order reigns again.

Reinforcing the balance between these two moods—and easing a tempo which isn't intended to be the gallop of farce—is the image one carries away of the chateau as a palace of dreams. The older inhabitants wander like pale ghosts, with nothing to cling to but memories of past glories: the ageing Madame Tussaud (Karen Kavli) plays patience and remembers that she was once Felix's first love; Tristan (Georg Funkquist) recalls that he too was a great cellist before Felix destroyed him; and Adelaide (Eva Dahlbeck), the faithful wife, calmly waits and watches over it all. And the others, led by an Isolde (Harriet Andersson) who shines with radiant joy at the thought of the pleasure which Felix finds in merely pronouncing her name, hover eagerly in the hope of receiving a crumb from the Master's affections. The dreams are not only of the past, but for the future.

What Bergman is saying, of course, is that art (Felix) must be experienced rather than sought for, explained or understood; and under the surface of the film lies a complex disquisition on the nature of the cruel, deceptive, egotistical, secretive and necessary thing we call art. Felix, in spite of his arrogance and selfishness, commands the divine quality of harmony, but neither he nor his gift can be pinned down for eternity. Felix dies, and at the end of the film a new, penniless genius, whom Cornelius and the ladies prepare to adore, slips easily into his place. This transience, which Bergman acknowledges as an essential part of genius, is what informs his film with its pervasive melancholy. The only thing, ultimately, that an artist can hope for is to die without having betrayed his art. "Adelaide, my darling," runs the letter from Felix which Cornelius finds hidden away in an attic, "I betray and deceive you, but remember this: if ever I fail in my art, you are to kill me"; and one of the most arresting shots in the film is the close-up of Adelaide's face as she waits patiently with a gun in her lap to see if Felix will actually play the critic's composition ("A Fish's Dream. Abstraction No. 14") which is the price of a biography to make him immortal. Adelaide is the final truth in Felix's life, a watch-dog over his integrity; she alone bears her real name instead of the fanciful Traviata, Beatrice, Madame Tussaud or Isolde with which Felix enshrines his other women. It is to Adelaide that Tristan (Felix's repressed *alter ego*) confides the chapter of "personal details" which he has stolen from Cornelius' manuscript. And in the final sequence, as Cornelius and the ladies gather excitedly round their new young genius, Adelaide and Tristan steal quietly away arm-in-arm, guardians of Felix's precious secret.

"The whole house is crazy," the impresario Jillker advises Cornelius, "You must be adaptable." But Bergman has become so established as the master of spiritual torment or stylish comedy, that his masterly juggling of contradictory moods in this

film obviously demands too much in the way of adaptability. No matter: *Now About These Women* will outlive the insults which have been heaped on it. "Genius," as Jillker aptly remarks, "is making a critic change his mind."

TOM MILNE

THAT MAN FROM RIO

DE BROCA ADORES HOKUM, and the force of his adoration makes *That Man from Rio* (United Artists) something rather different from a popular comedy-thriller. It is a comedy, it is a thriller, but much more it is a loving pastiche of every chase film one can remember, from the dimmest recesses of memory right up to Saltzman-Broccoli.

An idol is stolen from a museum in Paris, there is a murder by poisoned dart, there are kidnappings, pursuits, flights into the Amazonian jungle, tavern brawls, etc., etc. In chase of his snatched fiancée Agnes (Françoise Dorléac), Jean-Paul Belmondo scales buildings, steals planes, swoops through the jungle on creepers, battles continuously against impossible odds. There is a Jack-the-Giant-Killer air about a lot of the action—Belmondo's one strong card is tenacity. Overpowered, outnumbered, left behind, he's never shaken off the trail; losing sight of Françoise Dorléac yet again: "Agnes!" he wails, and sets off doggedly after her—on foot if there's no other means of transport available. There is a lot of fashionable gloss about, but it never rubs off on the central figures. The Belmondo character is a pre-war hero, pure of heart and mind. Belmondo impersonates him with the usual puppyish high spirits and even more than the usual self-mockery. The fiancée is, near enough, the essence of the mythically feminine: capricious, guileful, demanding, spoilt, childish, passionate, non-utilitarian, and desirable. Françoise Dorléac makes such a fantasy ideal extraordinarily convincing and at the same time obviously ludicrous, a clever performance which overshadows the other actors.

The good-heartedness of the thing surprises. It's all like a game played by a witty, sweet-natured and romantic child, absorbed in the make-believe. Our own absorption is delayed at the start by the dubbing, which ruins the first half hour or so. Once the shock of that is over, though, everything goes well. The game is played strictly according to the rules, nothing unprecedented is allowed, the people involved are all recognisably out of stock, there is no element of shock until the end—satisfied recognition, amusement, and the physical thrills of movement are the main pleasures. "Why are the bad guys winning?" complains Dorléac petulantly at a point where they, very properly, are. "They don't know who they're up against," says Belmondo, unruffled. We know that his confidence is justified, he's the Hero.

This is all pleasant enough. What gives it that extra edge is de Broca's delight in visual pleasure. He's not much of a thinker or a moralist, nor does he break new ground filmically. But there is a lushness, a passion for attractive clutter and amusing detail, which makes his work extremely inviting. De Broca has plagiarised, but with care. A great deal of the film looks like homage to *North by North West*, both in its use of architecture and of wide open spaces. *Dr. No* and *From Russia With Love* have had some of their more winning details lifted. There are little bits of Huston, and there are

"NOW ABOUT THESE WOMEN".



moments that look like affectionate memories of bad but appealing Saturday morning adventure films. From time to time de Broca pulls out the stops and indulges his liking for gorgeousness in a silhouette sequence, a beach night scene, a trek through a sun-drenched jungle. Without losing the narrative thread he milks the situation of prettiness. Astonishingly the whole thing jells, and the final unity is very satisfying. It works as a piece of high-spirited junketing, and also, because of its gracefulness, its self-consciousness, and perhaps most of all because of its all-pervading innocence, it lingers on in the mind as something more.

J. H. FENWICK

BABY THE RAIN MUST FALL

BABY THE RAIN MUST FALL (BLC/Columbia) inspired so little confidence on someone's part that the British press were not invited to see it before its summary release. Yet the most obvious faults in Robert Mulligan's latest film probably stem, ironically enough, from last minute cuts, made before as well as after its first showing in America. There are difficulties about the plot, transitions that baffle in a way that a director as cogent as Mulligan could never have intended. Here he is often oblique on purpose and sometimes opaque by accident, but pulling everything together is the feeling that he has made his basic material (Horton Foote's play *The Traveling Lady*) into something consistently his own.

The lady in question (Lee Remick) is married to hillbilly singer Henry Thomas (Steve McQueen), who has just been released on parole from a penitentiary. Brought up by Miss Kate, a tyrannical spinster who has warped his personality with her determination to dominate and crush him, Thomas stabbed someone in a fit of violence. Now the happiness of his reunion with his wife and little daughter is clouded by Miss Kate's determination to make him give up his music and go to night

"THAT MAN FROM RIO".



school instead. Breaking under the strain of his attempt to defy her, Thomas gives in. Miss Kate dies, but learning that the sheriff has sworn to keep him to his promise, Thomas goes berserk, digs the earth off the old woman's coffin and hacks at it with a knife until his friend (Don Murray) overpowers him. It is the end of his brief freedom.

The melodramatic aspect of all this is what finally prevents the film from working. Fortunately, however, it's not what the picture is about. In a sense the couple are both travelling, but in different directions, and the picture is about the period when they stop, the time when they come together and are briefly at home. Appropriately, its outstanding quality is understatement, or at least the things that nobody can engineer and no one shouts about: the marriage, for instance, which can be taken up exactly where it left off, and which is so happy that it colours all "the waste sad time stretching before and after." The home found by this couple, who have not lived together since their daughter of about five was born, is a little wooden house, painted white and standing in the middle of a flat Texan field. Outside it, and on its small verandah, are enacted all the most evocative scenes between them and their child (Kimberly Block, from whom Mulligan, always good with children, has drawn a remarkably delicate performance). Lee Remick, temperamentally ideal for her role, gives a kind of faultlessly low-key performance that is, in itself, a sufficient recommendation to see the film. Steve McQueen, less comfortably cast, emanates a kind of strength and goodness slightly at odds with the unbalanced character he portrays.

This too is part of the split that goes right down the middle of the film, the split between the psychological melodrama that wasn't made and the sensitive mood film that was. McQueen belongs to the latter, and the plot in his case stands quite simply for the external forces that prevent continued happiness. Like the final image of Remick and McQueen passing each other in different cars (his symbolically large and white with bars on the windows) the film is at a crossroads from which the characters cannot move forward; they can only move away. The interesting thing is what Mulligan has made of this idea.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

THE KNACK

SINCE *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* the whole battery of New-Wavy effects—jump cuts, speeding up and slowing down, captions, cinéma vérité-type interludes and so on—has become such a regular feature of would-be with-it British films that our readiness to be pleasantly surprised that it is done at all has rapidly been replaced by the more pernicky requirement that it should at least be done well. The big thing about Richard Lester's film of Ann Jellicoe's play is that though given the full treatment it actually works; the style seems not so much a grimly determined assumption of modishness as the natural and only way of making the film, and the relief of being able just to enjoy it on its own merits without having to wonder whether it should be understood as a bold gesture probably accounts for much of the pleasure one derives from it.

Whether it can, in any but the loosest



"THE KNACK": DONAL DONNELLY.

sense, be called the film of the play is open to doubt. As scripted by Charles Wood it is rather a series of free variations on the theme of the play, with occasional snippets of the original dialogue popping up disconcertingly in the most unlikely circumstances. The play was meticulously well-made, working out its pattern of three men, one fantastically endowed with the knack, one sufficiently, and one quite without, and the girl around whom their varying abilities are allowed to play, with Euclidian precision. The film goes off instead into wild and irrelevant visual jokes, counterpoints the action with snatches of Polo-ad comment from bystanders, and depends heavily on speed of hand to deceive the mind. As a passionate devotee of the play I feel this should madden me, but somehow it doesn't. The film has its own coherence, logic and style, and it is, above all, very funny—more so, in fact, than *A Hard Day's Night*, because it avoids almost entirely the monotony with which Mr. Lester there assembled pieces which taken one by one were often brilliant. Of course there are things to be said against *The Knack* (United Artists). There are places in it where a good idea is run somewhat into the ground (notably the sequence in which the bed is brought circuitously home), and the whole thing could lose ten minutes without damage. But it would be hard to better the performances of Rita Tushingham, Michael Crawford, Donal Donnelly and Ray Brooks (now it would be nice to see them in a stage revival of the play), and the sets by television designer Assheton Gorton only emphasise one's earlier mystification that the British cinema has not made more use of his remarkable talents.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

THE HILL

THE FOCAL POINT OF *The Hill* (M-G-M), and the best thing in a rather over-wrought film, is the hill itself. A great man-made sand dune, dominating a British army prison camp in North Africa during the last war, it imposes itself first as a bit of landscape, later as a proving ground, later still as a sophisticated instrument of torture. Sweating men in full kit pound over it, stagger down it, collapse on it; in the moon-

light their tormentor tests his own endurance by a brisk midnight run; and around it by day mill the prisoners who are spared this extra refinement of discipline, feverishly drilling under the African sun.

Early sequences pound the audience with the rhythms and procedures of a prison where everything has to be done at the double; and like all rituals, these become involving by reason of their very repetition, pointlessness and inevitability. Sidney Lumet has done nothing so effectively concentrated since he left the jury-room of *Twelve Angry Men*; although one also realises, as with *Twelve Angry Men*, that in the end the liberal clichés will out. If a coloured soldier is to be called a nigger (and how self-consciously the word is produced), then the film must have something very sticky in store for the men who perpetrate the insult. But *The Hill*, true to that tradition of old-fashioned social conscience Hollywood films and newer-fashioned British TV plays from which it derives, has rather to bamboozle its way to a conclusion.

The jovial monster who runs the camp (Harry Andrews) finds that his staff has been joined by an N.C.O. (Ian Hendry) whose sadistic impulses are less controlled by soldierly discretion. A man dies after a punishing day on the hill; and a group of new prisoners, led by an ex-sergeant major (Sean Connery) with an army-trained feeling for fair play, organise their revenge. The Negro soldier (Ossie Davis) has only to cast off his uniform, strip to his pants, and declare that he has had enough of the army, for this whole well-run machine to collapse in disorder. The bullies are revealed with the souls not of cowards, but of flustered under-matrons at a school for delinquent girls.

At Cannes the audience reacted to this denouement with high glee, cheering on every anti-militarist sentiment, the more naïve the better. But it's hard not to feel that Ray Rigby's efficient script is backing both ends against the middle, and giving any frustrated militarists in the audience a thorough run for their money first. The scenes of doubling and running and toiling up the hill, of the subtler indignities of prison discipline, the clipped commands and heavily jocular asides from under the cheese-cutter caps, are forceful because controlled. By the end, it's frenzied shouting laced with TV studio debating points. And, despite the obvious geniality of Ossie Davis's performance, one is already getting a bit wary of films which use Negro characters in just this way: it's a bit too easy, because it assumes a built-in audience response that encourages emotional double-dealing. *The Hill* would have been a more persuasive film, and truer to its burnt-out parade ground setting, if it had avoided quite so ostentatious a show of right-mindedness.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE LUCK OF GINGER COFFEY

MONTREAL, AS IRVIN KERSHNER saw it when he was shooting *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* (BLC/British Lion), is a perpendicular city with iron staircases up the outsides of the houses and, at least in winter-time, practically no sky. The streets are awash with snow turning to slush, and the winter light is mean and sparing like so much else in this inimical place. To add to the prevailing gloom, Ginger Coffey (Robert Shaw), an Irish immigrant trying to settle there with

his wife (Mary Ure) and daughter, has no luck at all—or so it seems until one realises that in any case he throws away his opportunities; he is a man who never recognises the main chance.

Such is the picture presented by this film of Brian Moore's novel, and there's no point in denying that it's depressing. Kershner is uncompromising; he approaches the subject on a single, sombre key at the cost, one feels, of almost everything that would make it acceptable to an audience out for entertainment. He even dares to push the hard luck story into such well-tried situations as the one in which would-be public relations man Ginger Coffey, reduced to delivering nappies in order to support his schoolgirl daughter when his wife leaves him, is directed to the tradesman's entrance of a block of flats by the snobbish porter. But Coffey's final rejection of the one good post he's offered (with the diaper firm) on the strength of a reporter's job he hasn't got, is the hardest thing to take. It says much for Irvin Kershner's direction and more for Robert Shaw's performance that one doesn't disbelieve it entirely, that one vaguely realises its link with Coffey's persistent *bonhomie* towards a world forever frowning on him. In fact, the film's relentlessness finally makes sense, but even without that Kershner's obvious absorption in his subject is rare enough in the cinema to be worth cherishing.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

MATA HARI

REAL LIFE LEGENDS ARE ALWAYS a problem. Of course we know—or we are willing to accept for the sake of argument—that Mata Hari really existed, but who can really believe in her? She is no more real than Faust or Don Juan, yet anyone who tries to deal with her entirely as a legend is bound to keep tripping over awkward snippets of fact, and unless he is very careful the collision may well do him and his work a serious injury. Sternberg gets away with it in *Dishonoured* by modelling his glamorous spy unmistakably on Mata Hari but not calling her that and claiming to offer nothing but a romantic fiction. How far Garbo managed to embody some fictional

figure called Mata Hari who was yet tied by a fine thread to historical fact it is still impossible for younger generations to know, since the oft-announced reissue of the film in question has not yet materialised. But now, instead, we are offered the memorable fancy of Jeanne Moreau as Mata Hari, in a film directed by Jean-Louis Richard and written by the director and François Truffaut.

Mata Hari (Gala) is a funny film—part funny-peculiar and part funny-ha-ha. It begins with Jeanne Moreau disguised as Musidora running through a number of Feuillade-like exploits, all handled with the right ease, directness and gusto—no self-conscious artiness here, and none of that pausing while we admire the effect which marred Franju's intended homage to Feuillade in *Judex*. The scene, for instance, in which Mata Hari, having marked her man at a ball, cheerfully locks his colourless fiancée in a lavatory and carries him off, besotted, into the night while all the others present rally embarrassedly to assist the unfortunate out of her predicament, has exactly the unhesitating confidence required to bring us smiling through, comfortably aware that the naivest things are being done for the most sophisticated reasons. So far so good: the balance between the straight adventure film and the send-up is justly held, and even the moments of real sentiment are kept at just that distance, with just that touch of "period" exaggeration, as in a prettily faded snapshot, to prevent them from breaking the spell by bringing too much awkward, unassimilated reality into the fantastic fiction.

Then, little by little, the film starts going off in another, unexpected direction. The romance with Jean-Louis Trintignant, which starts almost in farce as Mata Hari and her accomplice wrestle with the chair to which his vital dispatch-case has been thoughtlessly shackled, turns out after all to be the love of Mata Hari's life—that for which, in the best tradition of female spying, she is willing to sacrifice all. The later scenes, in which he finds out some of the truth about her (only enough to arouse personal jealousy, without patriotic complications), are in their different way as well done as the earlier, sent-up scenes, recalling in many ways another Franju film (strange how the spirit of Franju seems to brood over

"THE HILL".





"MATA HARI", THE EXECUTION SCENE.

Mata Hari), *Thomas l'Imposteur*, which even uses by the look of it one or two of the same First World War locations. The execution scene in particular, staged with the quiet formality of a provincial bourgeois funeral, is beautifully done. But the two worlds just do not mingle: because the funny bits in the first half of the film are managed so well, they make the shift of mood all the more difficult to achieve. The flesh-and-blood figures of the end cannot be fitted into the pasteboard fantasy of the beginning, peopled as it is by *Drôle de Drame* highlanders in white woolly socks and littered with absurd codes and signals.

Perhaps a more experienced director could have carried it off—maybe with an altogether sharper break in tone and style, as in Sjöberg's *Karin Månsdotter*. Or perhaps not. But at least the scenes Richard does do well he often does very well indeed, even if he does not finally manage to convince us that they all belong by rights in the same film. And needless to say Jeanne Moreau as *Mata Hari* is worth anybody's money.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

THE IPCRESS FILE

LEN DEIGHTON'S ORIGINAL thriller was fast-moving, written in patchy Chandlerese, rather mannered, but interesting for its disabused attitude to the spy game. Its hero was a scaled-down Philip Marlowe working by and against instinct in a moral vacuum. The hero of Sidney Furie's film version is more of a scaled-down and cockneyfied James Bond—self-made home cook as against aristocratic frequenter of expensive restaurants. The change, which is more loss than gain, was, I suppose, inevitable. The immense success of the Bond films meant that no other spy film could be made (especially by the same producer) without reference to the Bond image. *The Ipcress File* is not, as one had hoped it might be,

anti-Bond, but rival and *ersatz*. A screenplay which pointlessly respects the mechanics of the original but neglects its inspiration, set designs by Ken Adam (who else?), and a general air of Bondishness on the cheap mark the victory of production values over Deighton's intelligence and Furie's sensitivity.

But Furie is a sensitive director and the film is not a total sell-out. The colour work is inventive and the use of London locations imaginative enough to stand comparison with *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. More interestingly, in the film treatment the central character, superbly played by Michael Caine, gains in depth what he loses in ambiguity. For the first time in a British film heroism is no longer the prerogative of a tight-lipped aristocracy imbued with the public school ethos. Nor is it seen as a patriotic abnegation, the sacrifice of the individual to the nation. This cockney joker, a classic anti-hero if ever there was one, becomes a true hero through his will to survive. And his power of survival resides not in class conditioning (though the conditioning of the working class is probably as effective as any other), but in the assertion of his own individuality. Throughout the film he stands out as a human being, while his superiors are puppets. It is their almost sinister upper-class inscrutability, contrasting with his embarrassing directness, which gives the film most of its momentum and adds meaning and tension to the final pay-off. This fact alone, quite apart from the generally higher level of direction and performances, would be enough to put *The Ipcress File* (Rank) in an altogether different class of film from the Bond pictures it derives from.

For all its merits, however, the film remains a compromise—between the novel and conventional box-office values; between the need to keep on the Bond-wagon and the desire to jump off and do something fresh. This is a pity. Deighton's novel was an interesting attempt, though isolated, and not entirely successful, to renovate a tired

literary genre, and Sidney Furie is always on the point of becoming one of the best directors we've got. *The Ipcress File* is not likely to destroy his reputation. But it won't vastly enhance it either. Perhaps his *next* film...

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

HUSH... HUSH, SWEET CHARLOTTE

HUSH... HUSH, SWEET CHARLOTTE (Fox) begins with basking, nervous menace, like a basilisk in the sun giving an occasional twitch of its tail. A big white mansion seen from many angles and corners of the unweeded grounds; the anger of the Southern landowner's voice seething out through the window to infect the open air; the anguished face of Bette Davis's Charlotte filling half the screen as the credits unroll. Here indeed—even if the credits have been delayed with more than a hint of pompous self-congratulation—is Pliny's basilisk, "a fabulous creature with fiery death-dealing eyes and breath." Miss Davis continues to exercise both with scathing command, whether firing a shot-gun from the balcony at an invading bulldozer, or rounding off an explosive tirade aimed at her long-lost cousin with the remark that her job, Public Relations, "sounds pretty dirty to me." Basilisks shouldn't have their tails twisted, however, and soon Robert Aldrich is doing just that: overloading the Grand Guignol till Bette is submerged, and the film becomes laboured and ludicrous. She has an inventive repertoire of screams which more than adequately serves for severed hands, heads thumping down staircases, and the realisation that she has shot her doctor with what she took to be a ballroom posy. But when the doctor returns from the river where he's just been dumped, dripping mud all over the stair-carpet, even Bette is defeated. Her bellow of disbelief is cruelly identical to that uttered weekly by Lucille Ball in the face of some domestic calamity. In any case I'm not sure Bette is ideally suited to girlish convulsions while being face-slapped all over a car-seat. The slapping is administered by Olivia de Havilland as cousin Miriam, and her role really *is* unactable. The plot only works on the assumption that Miriam, a monstrous blackmailing leech, would be as outwardly silky, reasonable and puzzled by her own evil devices when she's alone as when observed by others. Small wonder that she eventually seizes the chance to show her true colours with such vicious sound and fury.

Otherwise the performances are the film. Agnes Moorehead is no less brilliant than Miss Davis as the rawboned, ferret-eyed housekeeper who, soon after Miriam's arrival, hands her a fearless note inscribed with the terse salutation: "Murderess!". In two fine short scenes Mary Astor suggests a lifetime of bitterness and guilt. (Incidentally, and intriguingly, whatever *did* happen to her husband's hands and head?) And Cecil Kellaway rounds off this whole debased if often compulsive catalogue of horrors (acknowledgment, please, to *Les Diaboliques*, *Gaslight* and *Baby Jane*) with a Vital Communication and a sympathetic hand-wave to Miss Davis, making one of her grandly enigmatic exits by limousine.

PETER JOHN DYER

FILM CLIPS

I HAVE BEEN TRYING to meet Bette Davis for years, but something always seems to get in the way: if it is not, as usually, the Atlantic Ocean, it is awkward shooting schedules, or she has come to make her personal appearances in just the week that I am away on holiday. But seeing that she was trapped here for a few weeks shooting *The Nanny* (director: Seth Holt) for Hammer, I determined that this time she should not elude me, and finally, in her last week of shooting, I managed to sneak in. All the big, nasty scenes were finished—not, I gather, that the film will be as nasty as the book might lead one to expect; this nanny may well turn out to be more sinned against than sinning, and I don't think she actually murders more than one person in the course of the whole film.

What was actually before the camera afforded pleasure enough: it was mainly Bette Davis giving one of her Looks, surveyed in the course of the afternoon from three different angles and through a number of takes without varying one iota from its established prototype. It was the look she gives when accused by her charge of attempting to murder him, and don't ask me exactly what it is intended to convey: a Davis look could always convey all or nothing at all, just as its giver chose, and this look is no exception.

Between looks, though, Miss Davis was in a talking mood, and we ranged widely. About films she didn't like, for instance. I confessed an unregenerate liking for *Beyond the Forest*; she positively barked with laughter. "Oh, that was a terrible movie. It didn't have to be; primarily it was terrible because they insisted on putting me in it. I was too old for the part, and I was temperamentally wrong. I mean, I don't think you can believe for a moment that if I was so determined to get to Chicago I wouldn't just have upped and gone years ago. I told them they should have put Virginia Mayo in the part—she would have been great. It was all a great pity, because the book is very good, and could have made a marvellous movie. But they turned it all inside out. The husband, for instance, is supposed to look like Eugene Pallette and be an absolute monster. So what do they do? They cast Joseph Cotten, who is so nice and sweet why should any wife be so desperate to get away from him? And then the lover—that big boring blond actor, what's he called?—was so dull you could understand it even

less. The one interesting thing Vidor did in the film was to make the train into her lover; that bit was good. But all the rest was just crazy."

Well, I said, maybe, but even if wildly miscast she did play Rosa Moline all out, and so gave her a sort of weird believability, whereas Joan Crawford, say, might have just coasted through on star quality. "Oh, I would never do that. Would? I never could do that. For one thing, if you really don't want to play a part, or really don't think you can, then you just don't take it in the first place. If for some reason you are forced to play it, then you do all you can with it, because that's your job, that's what you're paid for. That is the only way I can do things: the more truth I can find in a role, the more fully I can act it, the easier it is for me..."

Later we came back to the same subject, by a somewhat roundabout route. "How do you think *Design for Living* would revive today?" she suddenly asked. It emerged that she had been asked by John Gielgud if there was any chance of her doing a play with him. After establishing that it was not all, as she at first supposed, a practical joke, she had had the weird but wonderful idea that they should revive *Design for Living* with her in the Lynn Fontanne role, Gielgud (for whom her admiration is boundless) as the husband, and Redgrave as the lover.

From this we were off on Redgrave, and Miss Davis was recalling the Arthur Watkyn farce he appeared in a few seasons back. "I was pulled two ways, because part of me was furious at what was really the prostitution of such a talent, and the other part was fascinated because he was so obviously having a ball in the play—my, there wasn't a trick in the comedy book he didn't pull somewhere in it. I was wondering desperately 'What am I going to say when I see him?' Then I thought the obvious thing was the truth, so when I went round afterwards I just said to him 'You're having a ball with this part, aren't you?' and didn't have to say another word."

The obvious question now was what parts, if any, Bette Davis felt she had had a ball with. "I don't know. None, really, in quite that way. I find playing parts I don't believe in, parts that have to be played on

sheer technique, very difficult, and I do it very badly, so I would never choose a part like that just to relax in. I really enjoy myself most in the parts I believe in most—Margo Channing, Regina in *The Little Foxes*—because if I believe in them the rest is relatively easy. Maxine Faulk in *Night of the Iguana* was a part like that; it really was a ball, because it is at once so funny and so completely true—I think the most complete and believable woman character Tennessee Williams has ever written." (Incredibly, it was not written with Bette Davis in mind: she was approached to play Hannah Jelkes, and it was her own idea after reading the script that she should play the other.)

Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte, it would seem, has provided her with her least ball-like part of late. "The role is a cheat," she says emphatically. "To begin with, it's the sort of film where you can't give anything away because everything depends on keeping the audience guessing. The part of Charlotte really has to be played dishonestly, because though she didn't do the murder and knows that she didn't, she has to keep doing things in such a way that you think she might have, though there is no reason inherent in her situation in the story why she should. I tell you, it was one of the most difficult parts I have ever played; I just had to try to construct some sort of reality for the character in my own mind so that I could do it at all."

Though in general she thinks that as a film *Charlotte* is incomparably better than *Baby Jane*, she regrets *Charlotte's* deviations from the original conception of Henry Farrell. Apparently the best scenes in the film—hers with Cecil Kellaway, the dinner, and the Mary Astor scenes ("Didn't she do them beautifully!" says Miss Davis with unaffected enthusiasm)—were precisely the ones taken over unchanged from the original treatment.

Of her other recent films, *The Empty Canvas* was a nightmare and *Where Love Has Gone* she regards, very properly, as a mess: "The trouble is, the mother is presented as a monster and yet in the end you can't help thinking that after all she is the only one who makes any sense. In the book you get this ultimately rather sweet relationship between the mother and the husband

BETTE DAVIS AS THE NANNY, WITH SCRIPTWRITER JIMMY SANGSTER.



because he comes to appreciate her troubles bringing up a nymphomaniac daughter and trying to find a halfway decent husband for her. In the film that has all gone, so I said to them, if she has to be shown as a monster at least give me one scene being really monstrous to the daughter so that people will believe it. Unfortunately Miss what's-her-name didn't see it that way, and she did get top billing, so . . ."

Her role in *The Nanny* she seems to approve of: "It's very . . . (mimes severity and restraint) all through, so I can't rant and rage in it at all. Which is very good for me. It's good for an actor every so often to play a part he has really to work at." A note of the nanny creeping in, perhaps: eat up your nice rice pudding—it's good for you? Possibly, but next minute Bette Davis is heartily condemning modern film-making as "the ice-cream business" because it is dominated by the idea that everybody has to be sweet to everybody else instead of getting on, hated if necessary, with making the best movies possible.



The prospect of her settling down as a lovable, easy-going old nanny of a star seems remote indeed. "O.K., so many of the best people in films have been monsters. If it's necessary for them to be monsters in order to make good movies, then let them be monsters." If not exactly a monster, she is at least an authentic *monstre sacré*, one of the best and, it sometimes seems, one of the last. Long may she continue to exact our worship.

JERRY LEWIS IS ONE of what one fears may prove to be the last generation of film-makers to whom Hollywood is just naturally and without question the centre of the film-making universe. This has the unhappy side-effect of making his visits to Europe few and far between, so I was particularly happy to be able to catch him recently in Paris on a flying trip to shoot the location scenes of *Boeing-Boeing*, in which he stars with Tony Curtis for his old producer Hal Wallis. While there he had snatched time to see some films, and the one which had particularly taken his fancy was Pierre Etaix's *Yoyo*. He therefore specially wanted to meet Etaix, and the meeting was arranged for the night I was there.

The spectacle of the two star-directors meeting for the first time was fascinating: neither speaking any noticeable amount of the other's language, but both passionate admirers of each other's work. If the scene had taken place in a film they would no doubt have exchanged high-sounding pronouncements on the theory of comedy and their attitudes to life, since that is what artists in fiction always do. What in fact they talked about, though, was almost entirely technique.

The first thing Jerry Lewis wanted to ask Pierre Etaix was how many different speeds he had used in the opening silent-movies section of *Yoyo*, and Etaix at once reeled off a list of quite alarming length and variety (alarming particularly to the layman, who would no doubt notice consciously only a minute proportion of the variations). This sent Lewis off into a vivid description of his troubles trying to make a river-ferry turn round in double-quick time for *The Family Jewels* and finding he had to crank at six for twelve minutes to do it. Then Lewis wanted to know whether Etaix used real sound while shooting, or dubbed on the effects afterwards. Etaix said he put them on afterwards, and this time Lewis was off explaining the workings of his own intricate sound system, and how the use of real sound often brought him bonuses when the unforeseen took over—as with the creaking feet gag in *The Nutty Professor*, which began entirely by accident.

And so on and so on, with a bevy of attendant critics trying frantically to keep up a running translation, and Lewis and Etaix getting over to each other much more readily and completely by dumb-show and mime. A pity the cameras were not there to record it. But then I suppose even public figures of such celebrity have a right to at least a little semi-private life.

LAST TIME I WAS GRUMBLING about the sort of cuts our censors seem to feel called on to make these days. But of course not all cutting can be laid at their door. If one is irritated to find that a couple of the funniest scenes in *Good Neighbour Sam* have been eliminated, for instance, it is no doubt at least as much the choice of the distributor as the demands of the censor. The film would presumably have got an X certificate uncut without difficulty, and if the distributor decides that he would rather have it cut to get an A, that is his own look-out. (Incidentally, why is it that in such circumstances they never seem to offer alternative versions, so that any cinema which wanted to show the film uncut with an X certificate could? Is it just that the cost of doing so would be prohibitive in relation to any conceivable return?) Even more tiresome, though, because as a rule even less understandable, is the sort of ruthless cutting-down which takes place with increasing frequency just to cram two first features into a double-feature programme.

Admittedly, it is difficult to work up any great worry about, say, *Tammy and the Doctor* and *Those Calloways* losing twelve minutes apiece, or even *Ride the Wild Surf* being pared down from 101 minutes to 68. But it is distinctly irritating to discover, via the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, that films of the quality of *Cheyenne Autumn* and *The Train* have lost respectively nine and seven minutes even on their first West End appearances, and are all too likely to lose more as soon as they move further out.

These general release cuts are in fact the

most irritating and insidious sort, because no one seems to keep record of them. The correspondence columns of *Films and Filming* are full of complaints from provincial filmgoers that several of the scenes most commended by the national critics have vanished en route to their local cinema; and the general assumption of the average suburban or provincial filmgoer these days seems to be that he will automatically be seeing at his local something cut down from and inferior to what he might see in the West End. Sometimes this belief is unfounded, but all too often not. After all, what can you expect if you try to fit, say, *Youngblood Hawke* (136 minutes) and *Kisses for My President* (113 minutes) into one bill? The answer is, cuts totalling nearly an hour—and largely unrecorded cuts, since *Youngblood Hawke* was shown to the critics complete and *Kisses for My President* was not shown to them at all.

Now things are moving on a stage further: they are even showing the critics drastically cut versions of films. The excellent *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* as shown over here had lost 29 minutes, some of them very obviously; and *Dear Heart*, minus 18 minutes, even had glaring cuts in the middle of scenes, suggesting that Delbert Mann had suddenly, improbably acquired a New Wave taste for jump-cuts. No doubt some of the blame for all this must be laid at the door of the film-makers themselves: we always seem to be saying that films these days are too long, and maybe some of the shortened films would have benefited by further editing earlier. But last-minute cutting merely to facilitate programming is very different.

When films like *Dear Heart* and *Baby the Rain Must Fall* are cut so that they do not make complete sense any more; when *Major Dundee* is not only shortened twenty minutes in spite of the director's objections but then, I am told, loses two more scenes over here between trade and magazine shows; when the studio announces that the first cut of a film like Wyler's *The Collector* runs four hours and major characters have to be eliminated to get it down to workable length; then, to say the least, something is wrong somewhere.

TALK OF CUTTING, CENSORSHIP and all that reminds me that the magazine *Censorship* (3s., quarterly) has just devoted its second number to the censorship of films. The trouble with indignation about censorship is that it often proves hard to keep bubbling away when the examples of it we are asked to be indignant about are frequently so fatuous. I sometimes wonder whether the censors of the world do not from time to time indulge in a few deliberate mistakes just to dissolve annoyance into laughter and make us forget the many really monstrous pieces of interference they are indulging in at the same time.

Censorship certainly contains enough idiotic examples, and one could add a few more, like the retitling in South Africa of *Sex and the Single Girl* as, simply, *The Single Girl* (do you think she matures into *La Femme Mariée*?). But at the same time, it is only by just bringing together and listing at exhaustive (and exhausting) length the nonsensical and less nonsensical restrictions on our alleged rights as free individuals that we can be made fully aware of just how many of the rights are being nibbled away, and how far things have already got.

ARKADIN



MURNAU'S "THE FOUR DEVILS" (1928).

BOOK REVIEWS

F. W. MURNAU, by Lotte H. Eisner. Textes additionnels de Robert Plumpe et Robert Herlith. Illustrated. (Le Terrain Vague/Rodney Books, 45s.)

IN ENGLAND F. W. MURNAU has long been out of fashion, a textbook director for end of season film society shows. If people get round actually to looking at the handful of films by which he is known here—*The Last Laugh*, *Faust*, *Tabu*, *Sunrise* at rare revivals—they are, of course, obliged to admit that the films' *mise en scène* and pictorial values have survived better than many of their contemporaries; beyond that the significance of Murnau's work as a whole, and its surviving relevance, has mostly escaped us. In France, over the last decade, during which there has been considerable reappraisal of the relation of *mise en scène* and literary content, Murnau has come in for significant rediscovery. Mme. Eisner's interest in Murnau is deeper-rooted and more substantial than a fashionable rediscovery: the timing of her book is still significant.

Murnau was born in 1889. He had a sound education in Heidelberg and Berlin, studying literature and philosophy, and subsequently music and art history. He joined Reinhardt as an actor; but discovered the cinema during the war, and never seriously returned to the theatre. By 1920 he was collaborating with that strange *éminence* of the German post-war cinema, Carl Mayer, who was to be writer on many of his major films, including the American-made *Sunrise*. From his earlier work only *Nosferatu* (1922) is known and rated. Murnau's real celebrity began with *Der Letzte Mann* (1924), which was followed directly by *Tartuffe* (1925) and *Faust* (1926).

On the reputation of *Der Letzte Mann* (at the time the fact that it dispensed entirely with titles thrilled people most, though it was by no means the only film that had achieved this), Murnau went to America at the invitation of Fox. His prestige gave him autocracy; autocracy, as Mme. Eisner demonstrates, made him splendidly extravagant in the search for the effects he desired; and the result was the strange, artificial *Sunrise*—a film made with American artists in an American studio and American locations and yet wholly and authentically European. "Ne nous étonnons pas si, dans le résultat assez douteux du referendum des prétendus douze 'meilleurs films' de tous les temps, organisé en 1958 à Bruxelles, *Le Dernier des Hommes* y figure et non un autre film de Murnau: *Sunrise*. C'est que *Sunrise* est beaucoup moins connu." All the same, it seemed that the box-office results of *Sunrise* were not up to its artistic and critical achievement; and Murnau seems to have quickly

forfeited the independence Fox initially gave him. His next film, *The Four Devils*, was hampered; he ended his contract and left *City Girl* for others to finish (rather pathetically he sent Fox some ideas for improving the film after it had been completed in this way).

Then the swan-song, and for many the apogee of Murnau's art: *Tabu*. Mme. Eisner quotes in full, as needing no revision, her 1931 review of the film ("Apogée de l'art muet: le final avec toute sa perfection visuelle lorsque l'éphèbe, las de lutter, sombre silencieusement dans les vagues, et que la voile blanche, telle une vision, disparaît à l'horizon"). I think that this film has been underrated because of Murnau's association with Flaherty. Flaherty and Murnau met as fellow-refugees from Fox contracts and Fox pressures. They planned to make the film together; most of the money was Murnau's; the first idea was Flaherty's. It is now fairly well established that Flaherty quickly found himself out of sympathy with Murnau's approach and withdrew from the project. The eventual film was Murnau's entirely. But in the years since then the sturdy humanism of Flaherty has generally been more fashionable than the formalism and artifice of Murnau, so the film has tended to drift into the Flaherty canon and to be judged as a Flaherty film. In these terms it must be found wanting: anthropologically irresponsible, unjustifiably romantic, the great documentarist perverted by the UFA man with his meretricious manipulation of the marvelous natural resources of the Southern Seas . . . The film *has* to be seen as a Murnau film. Tahiti and its beautiful people are only the plastic materials for a film narrative, a modern Hero and Leander legend. Seen in its own rights *Tabu* has a poetry and rhythm which are unique.

Murnau died in a car crash, just before *Tabu* was released. Broadly speaking, Mme. Eisner points out, he was victim to a foible for reckoning his chauffeurs' looks more highly than their prowess at the wheel.

* * *

Mme. Eisner has worked indefatigably on her book for years, and her documentation is altogether admirable, whether in gathering evidence of Murnau's resourcefulness on the set; or collating texts with actual films; or sifting the evidence relating to Murnau's death; or explaining the two different versions of *Nosferatu*. Most important, she has endeavoured to reconstruct a whole picture of Murnau's output so as to redress the impression gained from an exclusive knowledge of his half-dozen too-well-known major films. Recently discovered pictures like *Der Gang in die Nacht* and *Schloss Vogelöd* she analyses at length; in the case of the large body of lost films (*Der Knabe in blau*, *Satanas*, *Der Bücklige und die Tänzerin*, *Januskopf*, *Sehnsucht*, *Abend . . . Nacht . . . Morgen*, *Marizza*, *genannt die Schmugglermadonna*, *Der brennende Acker*, *Phantom*, *Die Austreibung*, *Die Finanzen des Grossherzogs*), Mme. Eisner as far as possible reconstructs the evidence offered by their synopses and contemporary criticisms, descriptions and still photographs.

Mme. Eisner's first concern, to which she devotes the opening chapter of her book, plunging the unprepared reader bang into the centre of things, is to refute the arguments of Murnau's primary debt to his writers and designers. He worked with some of the most celebrated scenarists of a period when scenarists were at a premium: Robert Wiene, Carl Mayer (*Der Bücklige und die Tänzerin*, *Der Gang in die Nacht*, *Schloss Vogelöd*, *Der Letzte Mann*, *Tartuffe*, *Sunrise*, *Four Devils*), Hans Janowitz, Henrik Galeen. Four films between 1922 and 1923 were written by Thea von Harbou; and Mme. Eisner's pleasure in her own distaste for this scenarist ("vieille routière parmi les auteurs de film") is enjoyably communicated. Quoting extensively from the scenarios and comparing the relevant sequences in the finished films, Mme. Eisner demonstrates

that the distinctive plastic and poetic qualities of the films are constant, and are Murnau's own.

Murnau, his contemporaries said, had a camera instead of a head. Reading Robert Herlth's account of shooting with Murnau, and of the ingenuity of their efforts to give the camera its own life—mounting it on a fire-ladder, on a bicycle or on fat Karl Freund's belly for *Der Letzte Mann*—one can see the possibility of temperamental links between Murnau and contemporary directors. Not less in his conviction that, "il faut des sujets purement et essentiellement cinématographiques, que l'image est tout, qu'il doit y avoir du 'drame pour l'oeil' . . ." Murnau's pictorialism was not all drily planned on the drawing board. He loved accidental effects, discoveries made on the set by hazard. Moreover, aside from the *Kammerspielfilm* stylisation of the characters and the fashionable expressionist elements in the staging, he admitted to an affection for realism—even though the ways this realism was achieved were somewhat circuitous in their artifice; in *Sunrise* for instance dwarfs were used in the background of certain scenes to achieve a false perspective. Mme. Eisner's book helps the discovery of Murnau as a director of more facets and of a more contemporary interest than our traditional film society acquaintance might reveal.

NOTE: My French friends complain that Mme. Eisner's prose style is the French of a foreigner, lacking elegance. English readers are likely to find it, as French critical writing goes, concise and workable.

DAVID ROBINSON

THE SILENT CINEMA, by Liam O'Leary. Illustrated. (Dutton Vista, 8s. 6d. paper covers; 18s. cloth covers.)

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS of tackling the history of the silent cinema in some 20,000 words, and all of them are probably impossible. Liam O'Leary's amiable book chooses to cram in as much information as possible, and—almost inevitably—gets more and more cramped as it goes on, until the last pages are reduced to a breathless list of film titles, directors and dates. Still, it is primarily a picture book, and in this respect is splendid. A few old friends turn up among the stills—Belshazzar's Palace from *Intolerance*, Jannings with his mess of pottage from *The Last Laugh*, Lang's Siegfried bathing in the dragon's blood—but the bulk of them are unfamiliar, and all are chosen with loving care for their visual effect. The quality of the block reproduction is excellent, and the layout (given the limited scope of the format) is imaginatively varied so as to make the volume a real pleasure for the eye, and worth anybody's money.

The difficulties of producing an adequate text to go with the stills in such a limited number of words are so obvious that they disarm criticism. All the same, unsubstantiated statements are continually cropping up which would seem to owe more to tradition than fact. *Broken Blossoms* is cited as Griffith's "most satisfactory film," for instance, but why more so than the enchanting *True Heart Susie*, categorised as "light-weight"? "So-and-so's masterpiece" is a favourite phrase of Mr. O'Leary's; but in actual fact Stiller's *Song of the Red Flower* isn't a patch on *Gunnar Hedes Saga*; and is *The Last Laugh* really so much better than *Sunrise*, or *Fièvre* than *La Femme de Nulle Part*? Other minor irritations include the very erratic use of accents, and the quantity of misspellings (Jean Durand, Richard Barthelmess, Tora Teje, Adolphe Menjou, Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Ida Rubinstein, Philippe Hériat, Gerhart Hauptmann and Gösta Berlings Saga all turn up incorrectly). The use of translated titles throughout frequently sets one puzzling over strange new films such as "The Wheel", "Concerning Nice" and "The Tired Death" (*La Roue*, *A Propos de Nice*, *Der müde Tod*).

TOM MILNE

I LOST IT AT THE MOVIES, By Pauline Kael. (An Atlantic Monthly Press Book. Little, Brown and Co., Boston/Toronto. \$6.00.)

THIS IS AN UTTERLY exasperating book. It is incredible that someone should be so sensitive at one moment and so crass at the next, so lucid and yet so incoherent, so brilliant in flashes and yet so fundamentally blind to much of what movies are about. It is doubly incredible that someone who, like the little girl in the rhyme, is sometimes so very, very good (which is when she is actually talking about films to which she has responded), should waste four-fifths of her time on wayward and irrelevant assaults on films she has not bothered to understand and on other people's attitudes and opinions; and that her publishers should go along with this waste of energy and talent.

And yet it all figures. In an American context the attacks on the "inimitable" Bosley Crowther of the *New York Times*, on *Time* magazine, campus liberals and culture-vultures are pointed and serve a function. We could use a similar sniper taking pot shots at similar targets over here. And Miss Kael's crassness is a direct corollary of her sensibility. All her writing is based on subjective responses and the principle that if you don't dig it, it's nothing. (The idea of love and understanding being inseparable was good neo-Platonic doctrine long before hipsterism.) In what she has to say about a select few films—*Jules et Jim* or *The Golden Coach* for example—her ability to communicate a total response is dazzling. She writes from right within the film, by imaginative transfer with the director, or, more often, the central character—Moreau-Catherine or Magnani-Camilla as the case may be. But where no such transfer takes place her writing flags and becomes listless. The film itself takes second place and she springs to life again only when some critical idiocy goads her back into the fray.

The destructive emotionality of her polemical pieces, which appear to have been hammered away on the typewriter in a fine frenzy of personal indignation, makes rational counter-criticism difficult. *Hiroshima mon Amour* is not a bad film just because some silly people had silly reasons for liking it. The so-called "auteur theory" is not pure nonsense just because some of Andrew Sarris' statements in defence of it are pretty nonsensical when taken out of context. But the theory evidently annoys Miss Kael, partly because she is intolerant of other people's nonsense, and partly because consideration of authorship demands a measure of critical objectivity and messes up the purity of her precious responses. When Miss Kael goes to *La Notte* she is bored by the film and listens to the back-chat of the audience. It may not be Antonioni's best, but it is an Antonioni film and it develops the same preoccupations as the others and in a similar way. Granted that it did not elicit from her the same personal response as *L'Avventura*, nevertheless not so much the *auteur* theory but sheer commonsense demands that it should receive consideration. And this Miss Kael obstinately (and, I think, egotistically) refuses to give.

Criticism of this kind, always following a will o' the wisp, consistent only in its devotion to a personal feeling about what is and isn't in some way truly artistic, is enough to make an ideological Stalinist or a *Cahiers* mystagogue of the least dogmatic of readers. But the temptation must be resisted. An open mind shall be kept. To redirect what Miss Kael herself said about Siegfried Kracauer: someone who likes *Singin' in the Rain* so much can't be all bad.

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Lady Eve*, *Palm Beach Story*, *Sullivan's Travels*, *Hail the Conquering Hero*.
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BLC/COLUMBIA for *Major Dundee*, photograph of Sam Peckinpah.
BLC/BRITISH LION for *A Suitable Case for Treatment*.
M-G-M for *The Hill*.
RANK/UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL for *Bus Riley's Back in Town*.
COMPTON-CAMEO FILMS for *Repulsion*.
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DINO DE LAURENTIIS for *I Tre Volti*.
FILMPOLSKI/SYRENA for *Walkover*.
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CORRESPONDENCE

Canadian Film Board

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—It is unfortunate that your recent article on the National Film Board of Canada (*The Innocent Eye*, Winter 1964/65) only perpetuates the errors and omissions of the past histories. From you one should expect better scholarship.

I am referring to the flagrant omission from your article of the work and enormous influence of Terry Macartney-Filgate. Of the three articles written recently on the Film Board—yours, *Film Quarterly*, and *Image et Son* (April 1965), only the latter by Louis Marcorelles shows any understanding of Filgate's position in the development of the *candid-eye* series and his influence on the work of such cameramen at the Board as Michel Brault. Last week I confirmed Marcorelles' article with Brault and Jutra who both agree that the article in no way over-emphasises Terry's importance.

"Terry," Brault told me, "nous a donné tous un coup de pied dans le cul."

Yours faithfully,
JAMES BLUE

c/o USIA-IMS,
New York.

Ray's 'Charulata'

SIR,—News of the rejection of Satyajit Ray's *Charulata* by the Cannes Festival is baffling, to say the least. Cannes' standards have been far from rigorous in the past few years; take last year for instance—with the exception of *Sunna No Onna*, *Kvarteret Korpen*, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* and *La Peau Douce*, what else was even worth looking at, in competition? The Indian entry was *Mujhe Jine Do*, of which the less said the better. But how would even the most exclusive festival in the world reject *Charulata*?

Perplexity in India is complete, because *Charulata* has been widely acclaimed as Ray's most mature work since the trilogy. It has a perfection of rhythm, an exquisite, miniature painting-like quality in its visuals, and an economy and evocative power in the music which one has not come across lately. Its theme develops what came across more tentatively in *Mahanagar*—the Indian woman at the crossroads, no longer content with loyalty, and increasingly aware of her right to a happiness of her own making.

If Cannes rejected it as a film unworthy to be shown at the festival, then somebody's head is in dire need of examination.

Yours faithfully,
CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA

Calcutta.

The Red Desert

SIR,—Your review of *The Red Desert* has entirely missed the boat, and has done not even half the job of a responsible criticism. In dealing with the realm of the symbolic merely totting up convenient symbols is not only insufficient but also misleading; it is necessary to develop all of a film's symbolic resonances before one can attempt neatly to tie up a summary of the "director's intent."

Your ignoring of Antonioni's most persistent metaphor—the all-pervasive ships which continually assert their presence in visual shock after visual shock—is inexcusable. You imply that Giuliana makes a conscious attempt to "reintegrate herself with reality," whereas actually this is patently not the case. Faced with having to live in a complex, hyper-mechanised society where science rules and where both morality and immorality seem equally unsatisfying choices, Giuliana's desire is not for reintegration but for escape. It is in this context that the ships operate, offering the possibility of escape to a simpler, more natural society where life may be bearable. Giuliana's hallucinating story about the young girl on the tropical island (which you unforgivably ignore and which, incidentally, must be taken as casting new light on *L'Avventura*) not only affirms this desire but also establishes Giuliana's depth of dissociation from reality. Escape in the sense she wishes is of course impossible, for life in society can never be made less complex; the extent to which Giuliana cannot or will not see this, to which she does not want to "reintegrate herself," is a measure both of her disturbance and of the tragedy implicit in the film. Antonioni paints a threatening society in which even adjustment is mandatory, where even fantasy cannot be allowed to exist. The tragedy is not that of a loss of identity but of a very heightened sense of individual identity in a world which won't allow it.

You seem also to feel that "the dislocated mind cannot quite so automatically be related to the dislocated landscape." Permit me once again to disagree. The use of symbolism as allegorical one-to-

one transformation of meanings extant in two disparate realms of existence has not flourished since Hawthorne. The "distorted landscape" should not be taken as an independently existing parallel to Giuliana's mind; instead, one should see Antonioni subtly building a causal path between physical and mental wastelands. As suggested before, it is the complexity of the external which feeds Giuliana's internal state. More important, however, is the sense in which the external world itself is an extension of the girl's disturbed selectivity. She acts as the visual narrator of the film; what we see is what she sees, and how we see is how she with her "dislocated mind" sees. If the focus of attention is on fog, sludge, or black potatoes, it is not because the world outside neatly parallels Giuliana's state but rather because this is her perception of the world as it actually is. In no other way can the unreality of colour or the lingering of the camera on apparently unjustified images be explained. The symbolic resonances do not add separately but rather multiply together to produce an astonishing impact.

My real objection to your review is that you would restrict the film within a self-imposed framework of social meanings, rather than pointing at as many dimensions of possible relevance as your perception allows. The purpose of responsible criticism must not be to constrain the viewer but to set him free.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN A. TOBEY

Cambridge,
Massachusetts.

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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

ART OF LOVE, THE (Rank) The artistic life in gay Paris viewed through Ross Hunter-coloured glasses. Painfully overacted by James Garner and Dick Van Dyke, and ending with an unfunny joke about last-minute rescue from the guillotine. (Elke Sommer, Angie Dickinson; director, Norman Jewison. Technicolor.)

******BAIE DES ANGES, LA** (Connoisseur) A blazing blonde Jeanne Moreau haunting the casinos of the Riviera. Filmed by Jacques Demy with tremendous speed, light and airiness; as compelling as a session at the roulette tables—and far, far cheaper. (Claude Mann.)

***COLLECTOR, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Young bank clerk entomologist starts trapping girls instead of butterflies, and installs his prisoner in specially constructed cellar. Tolerably tense little war of nerves, but directed and written without much edge. (Terence Stamp, Samantha Eggar; director, William Wyler. Eastman Colour.)

***COSMONAUTS ON VENUS** (New Realm) Russian space fiction made with a sense of humour, and such excellent special effects that the inadequacy of the acting scarcely matters. (Kyunna Ignatova, Gennadi Vernov; director, Pavel Klushantsev.)

******FEMME MARIEE, UNE** (Gala) Fragments of a film made in 1964—or Godard's completest film to date; and one which even the squarest squares have acknowledged (albeit crossly) to be masterly. (Macha Méril, Philippe Leroy, Bernard Noël.) Reviewed.

GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD, THE (United Artists) George Stevens embalms the New Testament in a tasteful spectacular, magnificently set against backgrounds like Monument Valley, but otherwise so unimaginative that the only interest is in star-spotting among the eminent bit players. Max Von Sydow is an uninspiring Christ. (Charlton Heston, David McCallum, Dorothy McGuire. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision 70 presented in Cinerama.)

***HAND IN THE TRAP, THE** (Academy/Connoisseur) A gripping study of bourgeois corruption as it affects a young girl (Elsa Daniel) seduced by the man (Francisco Rabal) who jilted her aunt, now shut away in the attic. Based on a Beatriz Guido novel, it has Leopoldo Torre Nilsson's signature etched into every shot. (Leonardo Favio, Maria Rosa Gallo.)

***HIGH WIND IN JAMAICA, A** (Fox) Uneven but often engaging adaptation of Richard Hughes' much tougher novel, about some children kidnapped by pirates, enjoying themselves hugely, and scaring the superstitious pirates out of their wits. (Anthony Quinn, James Coburn, Deborah Baxter; director, Alexander Mackendrick. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

***HILL, THE** (M-G-M) Men disciplined by means of forced climbs over a man-made mound in a British military detention camp in North Africa. Sparks off liberal attitudes that are entirely familiar and latterly a little hysterical; but the hill itself, and the ritual that surrounds it, is superb. (Sean Connery, Harry Andrews; director, Sidney Lumet.) Reviewed.

I'LL TAKE SWEDEN (United Artists) Bob Hope, playing Tuesday Weld's father, has a few good jokes in an otherwise talentless comedy notable for its line in whining, pseudo-Swedish accents. (Frankie Avalon, Dina Merrill; director, Frederick De Cordova. Technicolor.)

***IN HARM'S WAY** (Paramount) Two-and-a-half-hour slog through the aftermath of Pearl Harbour: all the heartbreak and heroism of war, plus a spicy touch of rape, skilfully concocted by Otto Preminger. Patricia Neal's performance

shows up the pasteboard of the rest. (John Wayne, Kirk Douglas, Tom Tryon, Paula Prentiss. Panavision.)

****INVITATION TO A GUNFIGHTER** (United Artists) Modestly staged but completely gripping Western, with a fascinating eye for oddities of behaviour and dialogue. Produced by Stanley Kramer, but the script maliciously turns the liberal clichés upside-down. (Yul Brynner, George Segal, Janice Rule; director, Richard Wilson. DeLuxe Color.) Reviewed.

*****JOURNAL D'UNE FEMME DE CHAMBRE** (Fox) Jeanne Moreau takes over from Paulette Goddard, and Buñuel from Renoir, in this new version of Mirbeau's novel. The accent is very different—autumnal landscapes instead of summer gardens—but the result no less splendid. (Georges Gêret, Michel Piccoli, Daniel Ivernel.)

KING'S STORY, A (BLC/Columbia) Jack Le Vien turns his reverential attention from Churchill to the Duke of Windsor, for a film compilation of the events which led to the abdication in 1936. A sonorous Orson Welles delivers the commentary. (Director, Harry Booth.)

***KNACK, THE** (United Artists) Resolutely modish adaptation of Ann Jellicoe's play. Very well acted, and rather striking in its less frenzied moments when it isn't trying to be a Beatles film. (Rita Tushingham, Michael Crawford, Donal Donnelly, Ray Brooks; director, Richard Lester.) Reviewed.

***LITTLE ISLAND, THE** (Contemporary) Reissue of Richard Williams' ambitious attempt to combine the conventions of the animated film with more abstruse philosophical conceptions. Alternately comic and grim, and in total effect very striking. (Eastman Colour, part CinemaScope.)

***LITTLE ONES, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Observant and cleverly scripted tale of two small boys who run away from home to stow away to Jamaica: modest and really rather engaging. (Dudley Foster, Carl Gonzales, Kim Smith; director, Jim O'Connolly.)

***LORD JIM** (BLC/Columbia) Luxuriantly shot but otherwise flabby version of Conrad's novel, offering Peter O'Toole another excuse to display mystic masochism. James Mason's river pirate ambles sardonically away with any acting honours. (Paul Lukas, Curt Jurgens; director, Richard Brooks. Technicolor, Panavision 70.)

***LUCK OF GINGER COFFEY, THE** (BLC/British Lion) The hard luck story of an Irish immigrant family in Montreal, shot on winter locations to look effectively unlike any other city. Robert Shaw makes quite a character of the ill-advised Ginger. (Mary Ure; director, Irvin Kershner.) Reviewed.

*****MAJOR DUNDEE** (BLC/Columbia) Sam Peckinpah's third Western, heavily cut and beset by troubles, but still looking like a blood brother to *Cheyenne Autumn*. Superb camerawork by Sam Leavitt; fine performances from Charlton Heston, James Coburn and Jim Hutton. (Richard Harris, Senta Berger. Technicolor, Panavision.) Reviewed.

***MATA HARI** (Gala) A superb Jeanne Moreau demonstrates the art of spying by seduction in a period Paris designed as a graceful homage to Feuillade. Co-scripted by Truffaut as a series of mercurial mood changes, the film tends to plod where it should have direction to match. (Jean-Louis Trintignant, Claude Rich; director, Jean-Louis Richard.) Reviewed.

MISTER MOSES (United Artists) Sham morality tale, with Robert Mitchum as a diamond smuggler called Moses who leads an African village to safety, and Carroll Baker as the missionary's daughter he marries. (Ian Bannen, Alexander Knox; director, Ronald Neame. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***MY FAIR LADY** (Warner-Pathé) Rex Harrison's definitive Higgins, and Audrey Hepburn's up-and-down Eliza, preserved for eternity in yards of decor by Beaton. Cukor's contribution is mainly to steer tactfully, and the Ascot tea-party is a treat. (Stanley Holloway, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Gladys Cooper. Technicolor, Super-Panavision 70.)

NIGHT WALKER, THE (Rank) Barbara Stanwyck at the mercy of a malevolent dream lover, wandering window dummies, daggers and unearthly voices in a typical William Castle shocker, scripted by Robert Bloch. (Robert Taylor, Lloyd Bochner.)

OPERATION CROSSBOW (M-G-M) Routine account of how Britain conquered the threat of German V.1 and V.2 rockets. George Peppard,

Jeremy Kemp and Tom Courtenay lead the attack as secret agents, with Sophia Loren to brighten up Occupied Holland. John Mills, Trevor Howard and Richard Todd guard the home front. (Richard Johnson, Anthony Quayle, Lilli Palmer; director, Michael Anderson. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

*****PASSENGER, THE** (Contemporary) First public screening of Andrzej Munk's reminder, for those who forget, of the reality of the concentration camp. Left unfinished by Munk's death, but completed with stills and commentary to form a grave, haunting puzzle. (Aleksandra Slaska, Anna Ciepielewska.)

***PLEASURE GIRLS, THE** (Compton-Cameo) Conventional story about girls living *la dolce vita* and ending up pregnant, etc. But the dialogue is surprisingly fresh and perceptive, the performances are good, and Gerry O'Hara directs with flashes of real talent. (Francesca Annis, Ian McShane, Tony Tanner.)

******RED DESERT, THE** (Connoisseur) Monica Vitti in modern Ravenna. Her case may not greatly advance Antonioni's thesis about the pressures of industrial living, but the film is extraordinarily beautiful and audacious. Must be seen. (Richard Harris, Carlo Chionetti.)

***REPULSION** (Compton-Cameo) Polanski's technically assured case-book study of a girl driven to madness and murder by the thoughtlessness of others. Hallucinations brilliant, but otherwise erratic. (Catherine Deneuve, Yvonne Furneaux, Ian Hendry.) Reviewed.

RUNAWAY KILLER (Compton-Cameo) New Zealand's first locally produced feature film in years, with Colin Broadley as a doomed teenager (not a killer) on the run. Considerably cut and none too cogent, but some unfamiliar landscapes are compellingly evoked. (Nadja Regin; director, John O'Shea.)

SHE (Warner-Pathé) Uninventive rehash of the Rider Haggard yarn, pallidly set in 1918 Palestine. (John Richardson, Ursula Andress, Peter Cushing; director, Robert Day. Technicolor, Hammerscope.)

SOUND OF MUSIC, THE (Fox) Julie Andrews in the second of her all-conquering governess roles, as the convent novice who converts an Austrian naval captain and his family into a singing troupe. Almost intolerably wholesome. (Christopher Plummer, Eleanor Parker; director, Robert Wise. DeLuxe Color, Todd-AO.)

THAT FUNNY FEELING (Rank) Flat comedy about mistaken identity, with Bobby Darin and Sandra Dee angling interminably for each other. (Donald O'Connor, Nita Talbot; director, Richard Thorpe. Technicolor.)

*****THAT MAN FROM RIO** (United Artists) Philippe de Broca's engaging spoof thriller shot on location in Brazil, with Belmondo as the cheerfully indestructible hero plagued by crooks, crocodiles and the unpredictably feminine Françoise Dorléac. Dubbed into English, unfortunately. (Jean Servais. Eastman Colour, print by Technicolor.) Reviewed.

THOSE MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES (Fox) Expensive slapstick about 1910 London-Paris air race, in which British insularity and ancient jokes triumph over an international cast. (Sarah Miles, Stuart Whitman, James Fox, Alberto Sordi, Jean-Pierre Cassel; director, Ken Annakin. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

***TO TRAP A SPY** (M-G-M) One of the better imitation James Bond thrillers, extravagantly decorated, charmingly acted by Patricia Crowley, and often quite funny. (Robert Vaughn, Fritz Weaver; director, Don Medford. Metrocolor.)

***VON RYAN'S EXPRESS** (Fox) Wartime escape story, starting with some feeble *Bridge on the River Kwai* philosophising, then moving mercifully into straight action stuff, and passing the time quite pleasantly. (Frank Sinatra, Trevor Howard, Sergio Fantoni; director, Mark Robson. DeLuxe Color.)

WILD LIVING (Gala) Zany French film about the adventures of a pretty kleptomaniac (Marie-France Pisier) with an insatiable lust for jewels. Inconsequential and occasionally surrealist, but rarely either interesting or funny. (Bernard Blier, Ziva Rodann, Fred Clark; director, Pierre Montazel. Franscope.)

*****WOMAN OF THE DUNES** (Contemporary) *The Collector* in reverse, as it were—this time the entomologist gets trapped, at the bottom of a Japanese sandpit. Imagery precise, beautiful and haunting; symbolism capable of looking after itself. (Eiji Okada, Kyoko Kishida; director, Hiroshi Teshigahara.) Reviewed.

MARK BROTHERS

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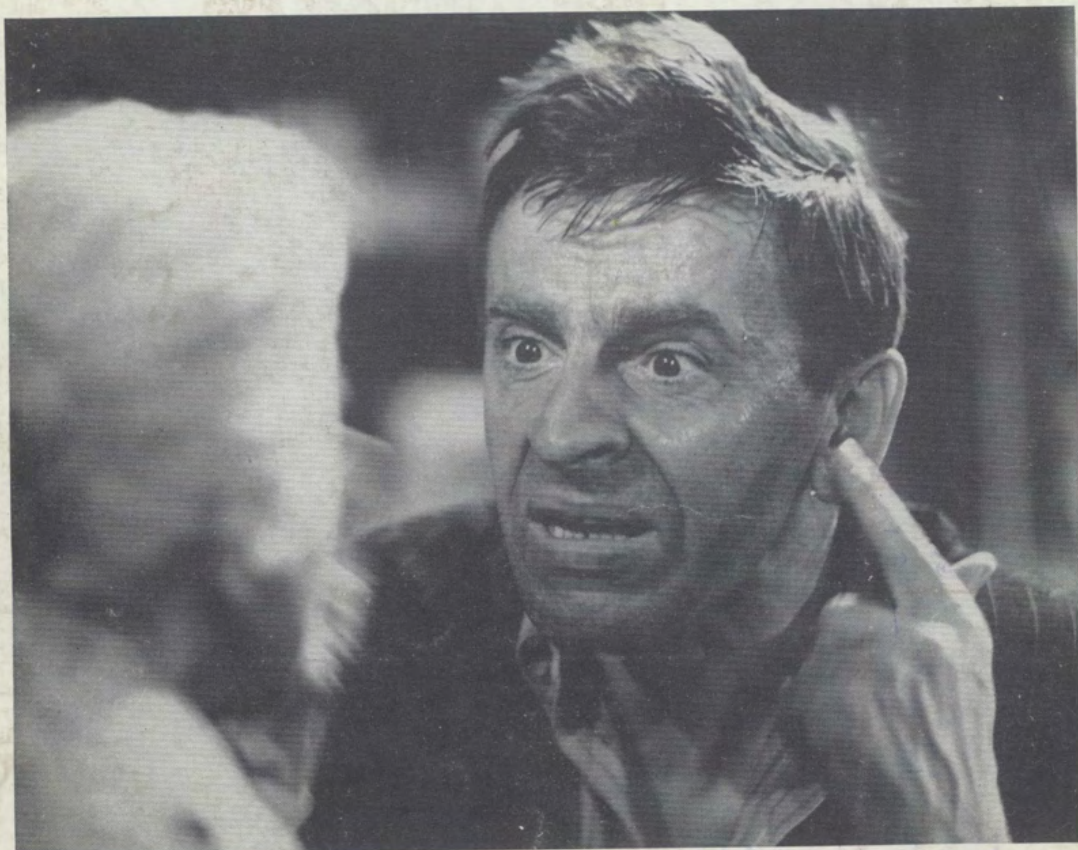
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